

"In the latter days, the sun shall rise from the west" • Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be on him)

“Surely, your Lord is Allah  
Who created the heavens and  
the earth in six periods; then He  
settled Himself on the Throne...

# creationism

16 Concepts of  
Creation in Hinduism

18 Creation  
Myths in Ancient  
Cultures

22 Creationism vs.  
Evolution

24 The Islamic  
Teaching About  
Allah, Creator of  
the Universes

# The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

**The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community** is a religious organization, international in its scope, with branches in 195 countries in Africa, North America, South America, Asia, Australasia, and Europe. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was established in 1889 by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> (1835-1908) in Qadian, a small and remote village in the Punjabi province of India. He claimed to be the expected reformer of the latter days, the Awaited One of the world community of religions (The Mahdi and Messiah). The Movement he started is an embodiment of the benevolent message of Islam – peace, universal brotherhood, and submission to the Will of God – in its pristine purity. Hadhrat Ahmad<sup>as</sup> proclaimed Islam as the religion of man: “The religion of the people of the right path” (98:6). The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was created under divine guidance with the objective to rejuvenate Islamic moral and spiritual values. It encourages interfaith dialogue, diligently defends Islam and tries to correct misunderstandings about Islam in the West. It advocates peace, tolerance, love and understanding among followers of different faiths. It firmly believes in and acts upon the Qur’anic teaching: “There is no compulsion in religion” (2:257). It strongly rejects violence and terrorism in any form and for any reason.

After the passing of its founder, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has been headed by his elected successors. The present Head of the Community, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, was elected in 2003. His official title is Khalifatul Masih V or Fifth Successor of the Promised Messiah.



Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908)

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The *Muslim Sunrise* is published by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA, 15000 Good Hope Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905, Phone 301.879.0110, Fax 301.879.0115, under the auspices of Dr. Ahsanullah Zafar, Ameer and National President. The views and opinions expressed by individual contributors in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA.

The *Muslim Sunrise* welcomes letters to the editor, questions and submissions. Email us at [MuslimSunrise@Ahmadiyya.us](mailto:MuslimSunrise@Ahmadiyya.us) or go online to [www.MuslimSunrise.com](http://www.MuslimSunrise.com).

Library of Congress Call Number BP195.A5 M8

Mailing Address: The Muslim Sunrise, 15000 Good Hope Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905, Phone: 301.879.0110, Fax: 301.879.0115.

Muslims follow the name of God's prophets with the prayer *alaehis salaam* or 'may peace be upon him,' and for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu alaehi wasallam* or 'may peace and blessings of God be upon him.' Companions of prophets and righteous personalities who have passed away are saluted by *radhi-Allaho anhu/a* or 'may Allah be pleased with him/her.' While such salutations sometimes are not set out in the text for readability, we encourage readers to offer these prayers as if set out in full.

Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq (1872-1957) was the first Ahmadiyya Muslim missionary to arrive in America. In 1921, he founded the *Muslim Sunrise*, which stands today as the longest running Muslim publication in America. The magazine seeks to open discussions on Islam and topics relating to religion in general. It highlights the role of Islam in an ever changing global society. It provides a platform for public opinion on contemporary issues and presenting their solutions from an Islamic perspective.

[www.muslimsunrise.com](http://www.muslimsunrise.com)



AHMADIYYA  
MUSLIM COMMUNITY

*United States of America*  
*Muslims who believe in the Messiah,*  
*Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani*



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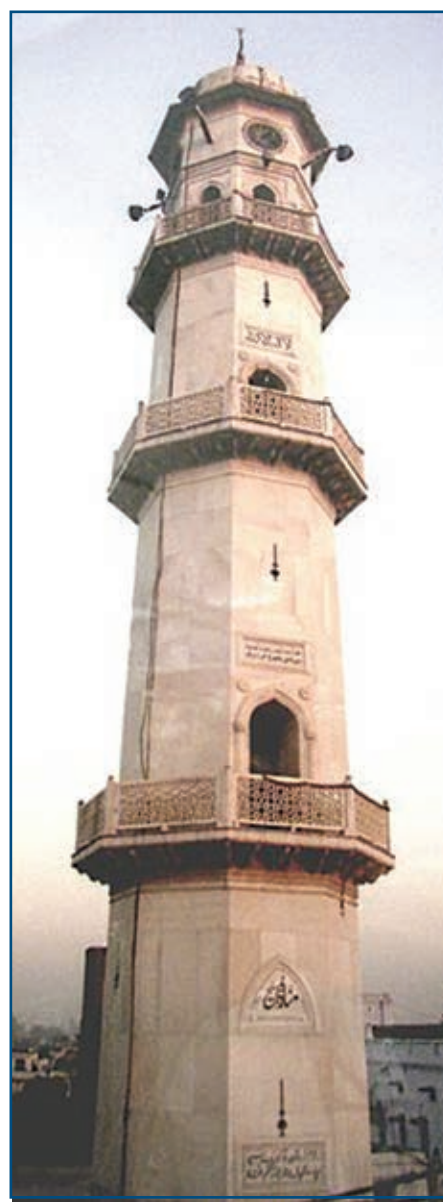
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will  
**YOU?**  
Be  
THERE

*Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Annual Convention 2013*  
*June 28-30, Harrisburg, PA*



Summer 2013 • Volume 94 • Issue 2



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## From the Holy Qur'an

Chapter 3, Surah Al-Imran, 191-192

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ  
وَاجْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِأُولِي  
الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٩١﴾

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَى  
جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ  
وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا  
سُبْحَنَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿١٩٢﴾

[3:191] In the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of the night and the day there are indeed Signs for men of understanding;

[3:192] Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and *lying* on their sides, and ponder over the creation of the heavens and the earth: "Our Lord, Thou hast not created this in vain; *nay*, Holy art Thou; save us, then, from the punishment of the Fire."

## In the Words of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>

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**T**he All-Wise has disclosed this mystery to me that the whole of this universe including all its sections is designed to carry out whatever is intended by the Cause of causes and is like the limbs which do not operate on their own, but are supplied with power all the time by the Great Soul as all the faculties of the body operate under the direction of the soul. This universe is a substitute for limbs for that Great Being.

There are some things in it which are as the light of His countenance, which serve as light overtly or covertly according to His will. Some are like His hands, some are like His wings and some are like His breath. In short, this universe collectively is like a body for



God Almighty and all the glory and the life of this body is derived from the Great Soul, Who is its Sustainer. Whatever movement is willed by that Sustainer, the same appears in all or some of the limbs of that body as may be desired by that All-Sustaining Being.

To illustrate this, we can imagine that the Sustainer of the universe is the Great Being, Who has numberless hands and feet and numberless other limbs possessing unlimited length and breadth and like an octopus this Great Being has tentacles which spread out to all corners of the living world and draw everything to themselves. These limbs are called the universe. When the

Sustainer of the universe makes a move, full or partial, it neces-

sarily creates movement in His limbs and He manifests His designs through these limbs and not in any other way. This is an easily understood illustration of the spiritual reality that every section of creation is subject to the designs of God Almighty and discloses His hidden designs in its countenance and carries them out with the utmost degree of obedience. This obedience is not at all based on governance and coercion. Everything is drawn towards God Almighty as if by magnetic power and every particle is naturally inclined towards Him as the different limbs of a body are inclined towards that body. Thus, it is quite true that the whole of this universe is like the limbs of that Great Being and that is why He is called Sustainer of the universe. As the soul is the sustainer of the body, He is the Sustainer of the whole of creation. Had that not been so the whole system would have run out of order.

Everything willed by that Sustainer whether overt or covert, whether related to the faith or to the world, is manifested through the creation and none of His designs is manifested on earth except through that means. This is the eternal law of nature which is in operation since the beginning.

(Taudih-e-Maram, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 3 pp 88-91)

Taken from Essence of Islam Volume I, pages 110-112

# Editorial

**A**s human beings we are conscious of our surroundings. We see the sun, the moon, the stars and the skies around us. We have an eternal quest to find out who created everything around us. It also leads to the question who created us. From ancient times, religious saints and prophets have taught that it is God Who is the Creator of everything.

We see the whole universe around us working in such an orderly fashion that it alludes to some of us as if it works by itself. Some of us are willing to ignore the fundamental fact that we experience in our lives every day that things do not operate by themselves. Our limbs move, but there is something which we can refer to as our soul which dictates the moves. The universe can be viewed as limbs of a body and God is the soul that directs it.

Science is the study of the physical universe or the work of God. As science progresses in its research and knowledge, it continues to verify and strengthen the notion that everything in the universe is orderly and without flaw. Scientist conclude that there must be a creator but some

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are not willing to accept God as the Creator. Such a sophisticated and organized universe could never be the result of a chance or an accident.

Unfortunately, science and the Bible have many differences and that has resulted in many Western scientists to abandon religion altogether. Disagreements between Galileo and the Vatican about the earth being round is an example of clear, factual dispute between the Bible and scientific knowledge.

The Holy Qur'an has been studied for over 1400 years by its followers as well as outsiders. There has not been a single verse of the Holy Qur'an that has been shown to be in opposition

to any scientific discoveries so far. The Holy Qur'an is not a book of physics but everything in it coincides with science. It describes the stages of life in a womb, movement of planets in relation to each other in their own orbits and the source of life being water. Science has not refuted any of these facts revealed to an unlettered person named Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>.

In our quest of knowledge and the reason for our being we need to explore further into the knowledge laid out in the Holy Qur'an which could open many doors for us. In addition, it provides us the knowledge of the spiritual world and spiritual working which is similar and in sync with the physical world.

In this issue we have provided the concept of creation from the standpoint of other older religions as well as the Islamic viewpoint. We hope that the readers would get some insight into this subject and try to further their knowledge. Our consciousness about looking for a creator is also given to us for a reason. The search for a creator, in itself, could be the means of achieving our very goal in life.





# Islamic Solution for World Peace

By Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad  
Khalifatul Masih V  
May 11, 2013 at the  
Montage Hotel  
Beverly Hills, CA

All distinguished guests (*Peace and blessings of Allah be upon you all*)

First of all, I would like to thank all of our guests who have accepted our invitation to this event and who by coming have enlightened the occasion. I also thank all those honourable guests who have spoken and praised the Community and I also thank all those, who as a gesture of goodwill, have given gifts, especially the key to this city. Thank you for this. Your kind approach towards an Islamic



religious organisation is clearly demonstrated by your attendance and shows that you have a very tolerant attitude and a keen desire to learn about Islam.

With these few words, I would like to turn towards an issue of great importance and of which there is an urgent need to deliberate and talk about in today's world. What I wish to discuss is something that has caused Islamaphobia in the Western and non-Muslim countries. There can be no doubt that this state of fear and anxiety has been fueled by the acts of certain so-called Muslims or so-called Muslim groups.

However there is also no doubt, that the acts of terrorism or extremism they perpetrate have nothing whatsoever to do with the true teachings of Islam. The very meaning of 'Islam' is peace, security and giving a guarantee of protection against all forms of harm and evil. Indeed, the Holy Qur'an declares that this is the teaching that every single Prophet of God taught.

Islam requires Muslims to abide by its teachings and fundamental amongst them is that they must not only fulfil the rights owed to God Almighty, but just as importantly they must also fulfil the rights owed to God's Creation. The Qur'an has shined a bright light on the beauty of the teachings of *all* Prophets by making it clear that they *all* drew mankind's attention to fulfilling the rights owed both to God and to His Creation.

How then could it be possible, that on the one hand, God has praised the qualities of *all* religions for urging mankind to fulfil the rights of God and of man, yet on the other hand God could enjoin the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>, upon whom the Great Book was revealed, to not establish peace and security in the world? How could it be possible that they were instructed to cause destruction and to destroy the peace and security of the world? Certainly no wise person could ever accept this.

True justice and fairness requires that rather than judging Islam in a prejudiced manner or by making false assumptions based on hearsay, a person should study the religion and try to develop an understanding of its teachings before criticising it and its Founder. An informed decision about any issue can only be made once a person has studied its teachings in depth and strived to learn the truth.

The truth or reality of any faith can only be learned from those who are practising or striving to follow its true and authentic teach-



## Spiritual leader visits Chino

Elated with the visit this week of their spiritual leader, members of a Chino mosque chanted and sang Tuesday night as he returned from a luncheon with dignitaries in Beverly Hills. Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the Khalifa of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Movement, visits Tuesday night with members of the Baitul Hameed Mosque in Chino.

"Long live the founder of the community," the men of the Baitul Hameed Mosque chanted as vehicles containing Mirza Masroor Ahmad, his wife and entourage drove into the mosque complex on Pipeline Avenue, north of Philadelphia Street. The women sang a poem that praised God for the Promised Messiah.

During his first visit to the West Coast, the Khalifa met with families of the Ahmadiyya community at the Chino mosque, and delivered a Friday sermon that was broadcast live on Muslim Television Ahmadiyya (MTA) to more than 200 countries around the world. It was at the Beverly Hill's prestigious Montage Hotel that the Khalifa hosted a reception and luncheon for LA civic, political and faith-based leaders.

Khalifatul Masih's message "Islam the Solution for World Peace," delivered during the program was to promote peace, help those in poverty and condemn violence.

More than 250 people attended the reception, including Rep. Gloria Negrete McLeod, D-Montclair, Rep. Karen Bass, D-Culver City, Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca, Los Angeles Police Department Chief Charlie Beck and Chino Police Chief Miles Pruitt.

This was the Khalifa's third trip to the United States. He visited the East Coast in 2008 and 2012.

*Reprinted with permission, [www.dailybulletin.com](http://www.dailybulletin.com)*

***The truth or reality of any faith can only be learned from those who are practising or striving to follow its true and authentic teachings. Today, it is the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, which claims to follow the original and true teachings of Islam and is spreading it.***

Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V<sup>aba</sup>



ings. Today, it is the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, which claims to follow the original and true teachings of Islam and is spreading it.

Upon hearing this, you may question how Ahmadis can claim that they alone understand the true teachings of Islam, given that a large portion of Muslims and Islamic clergy do not even consider Ahmadis to be Muslims.

To answer this question, firstly and as I have already said, the Qur'an has clearly stated that Islam is a religion of peace that has nothing to do with terrorism or extremism. And secondly, in a grand prophecy made by the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>, he said that as had happened with all previous religions, a time would come when the state of Muslims would become ruined and corrupted.

The Muslim scholars would spread false doctrines and ideologies and there would be great division and conflict within the Muslim world. Whilst the Holy Qur'an would remain preserved in its original state, false commentaries and interpretations would be made which would lead Muslims away from its true teachings.

According to the prophecy, when such a desperate state of affairs came to pass, God Almighty would send a person as the Promised Messiah and Imam Mahdi to rejuvenate Islam. He would clarify the correct meanings of the Qur'an and would inform the world of the true Islam practiced by the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> and his rightly guided successors 1400 years before.

The Promised Messiah would guide the world towards living together in love, peace and harmony and would foster a spirit of mutual understanding and reconciliation. The Promised Messiah would do all of this in light of the shining example of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> and the true teachings of the Qur'an. Furthermore, the Promised Messiah would bring an end to all forms of religious warfare.

We, Ahmadi Muslims, believe that the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, was the very person who was sent as the Promised Messiah and Imam Mahdi according to the prophecies of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>. We believe he came as a beacon of light to convey the true and luminous teachings of Islam to the entire world.

With these words of introduction, I shall now briefly present some examples of the beautiful and peaceful characteristics of Islam.

Before I give specific examples, I should mention that the person who followed the teachings of the Qur'an to the greatest extent possible was the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>. That is why one of his wives once said that his morals and his acts were a perfect mirror image and reflection of the teachings of the Qur'an.

Consequently, if a person studies the Qur'an then the life and character of the Holy Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> will naturally become clear and apparent. In the limited time available it is not possible for me to cover all aspects of the Qur'an, in fact it is not possible for me to cover even one aspect of its teachings. Nonetheless, I shall try to briefly explain one part of Islamic teaching, which has sadly become very misunderstood in the modern world and thus has caused a great deal of fear to develop in the non-Muslim world.

I refer to the teachings of the Qur'an and the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> in relation to establishing peace in the world.

The Qur'an was revealed by Allah to the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> and from the very first verse of its very first chapter the Qur'an has given a message of peace. The first verse of the Qur'an reads:

*"All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the worlds."*

This verse means that the God who Muslims worship, is the One God, who sustains and nourishes everything and everyone without any distinction. He fulfils all of the needs of His Creation. In other words, He is the God of the Christians, the God of the Jews, the God of the Hindus and indeed He even gives nourishment and provides to those who do not believe in His existence.

Whenever I reflect upon this particular point, I realize that I believe in that One God who is the Lord of *all* nations, *all* races and *all* religions, and so it becomes impossible that I could ever develop any hatred in my heart for any nation, any race or any religion. In this context I would like to say that my sympathies and my prayers are with the victims of the recent Boston attack. We fully condemn that attack.

A Muslim has been commanded by God Almighty to pray five times a day and to recite the opening chapter of the Qur'an in each unit of prayer. And so, at the very least, a Muslim must repeat the prayer that His Lord is the '*Lord of all of the Worlds*' at least thirty-two times each and every day.

The entire world is God's Creation and He loves His Creation dearly. Thus the reason we praise the '*Lord of all the Worlds*' and repeat this prayer so many times each day is so that we realise and accept the beauty of *all* people and *all* nations because they are all part of God's Creation. When the beauty and merit of something is accepted, then it is impossible to bear hatred or malice towards it, rather love and compassion shine forth.

If this point is understood, then the question can not even arise in the heart of a true Muslim that he should bear enmity, ill-will or hatred towards any of God's Creation.

This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>, who had the greatest insight and understanding of God's Word, used to recite the words "*All Praise belongs to Allah, Lord of all the Worlds*" not just in his obligatory prayers, but also in the countless voluntary prayers he used to offer. More than anyone else, his heart was consumed by love for all and was entirely free from any form of hatred or spite.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> had love for all of God's Creation, but most particularly for mankind, because humans have been deemed to be the best of God's Creation. Human beings have been given wisdom to differentiate between right and wrong and so there is reward for goodness and punishment for wrongdoing. Due to the infinite love God instilled in the heart of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> for all people, he used to feel great anguish and despair for the state of mankind. He was constantly overwhelmed by a concern that due to wrongdoing a large number of people were at grave risk of incurring the Wrath of God and His Chastisement.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> used to spend night upon night, beseeching his Lord and praying that those who had forgotten God became guided to the right path. He used to feel this burden with such intensity that Allah the Almighty has said in the Qur'an that the Holy Prophet would grieve himself to death due to his anguish for mankind. The Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> was held captive and enslaved in his heartfelt distress and desire to save the people of the world from destruction.

And so it is a cause of great injustice that many people today try to stain his blessed character by saying that, God forbid, he brought teachings of cruelty, oppression and injustice.

Today, when we the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat raise the slogan of '*Love for All, Hatred for None*' as a means to establish global



peace, we do so directly in fulfilment of the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> was so consumed by his desire to serve humanity and to fulfil the rights of mankind that throughout his life he stood ever ready for this cause. Even after becoming a Prophet of God, which was a huge responsibility and the greatest task imaginable, he said that if any person, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, called him at any time for the mission of serving humanity, then he would most certainly join them in their effort to serve mankind.

This was *his* example, whereby irrespective of religion, if a person was in any kind of need or came from a deprived segment of society, he deemed it essential to come forward to help and assist him. Despite his great status as Islam's Founder and a Prophet of God, he deemed it of utmost importance to work towards this pious objective with non-Muslims.

The question may well arise in some people's minds that if the Holy Prophet Muhammad was filled with so much love for humanity, then why is his name associated with warfare? Why did he take part in some wars and why did he send some armies into battle?

To answer this question, we must assess whether an entirely pacifistic attitude, whereby war in all circumstances is wrong, is a correct doctrine? Or alternatively whether in extreme circumstances fighting may be permitted? And, if in certain circumstances it is permissible, then what are the required conditions and to what extent is war allowed? What does Islam teach us about this?

As I explained earlier, when a Muslim praises the 'Lord of all the Worlds', the beauty of God's Creation comes before him and he is compelled to praise and be attracted to it. When this beauty is acknowledged, one cannot harbour any ill will or malice towards God's Creation.

However there will always be some people who do not act upon this teaching and who are determined to spread disorder in society and the wider world. Islam has given very clear and detailed guidance about how to reform

*The Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> was so consumed by his desire to serve humanity and to fulfil the rights of mankind that throughout his life he stood ever ready for this cause.*



such people so that global peace and harmony can be maintained. Allah the Almighty has said in the Qur'an that had not Allah repelled some men by others the earth would indeed be full of mischief. But Allah is the Lord of Grace to all Peoples. (Chapter 2 Verse 252)

If we ponder the meaning of this, we see that peace is undoubtedly the best state of affairs and so Allah has naturally instilled its attraction inside the human mind. However sometimes man goes against his natural tendencies and inclinations. His greed, envy, selfish interests and hatred overpower him and incite him to such an extent that he no longer has any concern for the rights of others.

As a result disorder develops in society, in a country and in the wider world. Such people move far away from peace. It becomes their objective to suppress and violate the freedoms that society hold dear. They attack basic human rights such as freedom of conscience and freedom of thought by using force and severity. Indeed, such people also target religious freedom and seek to suppress it.

It was when such subjugating circumstances arose, that Allah granted permission to the early Muslims to respond to force with force. This permission was granted only as a means to stop disorder, to stop cruelty and establish peace and harmony.

Allah has said in the Qur'an that He bestows His Grace and Blessings on *all* of the Worlds. He does not favour any nation or region. He does not desire peace for just a limited few, rather He wants to see the entire world filled with peace, harmony and compassion. In the sight of Allah, all of His Creation is equal and the same.

If God has enabled someone to become wealthy then that person does not have the right to deprive a poor person of his rights. Similarly, if any nation or country becomes powerful and wealthy it does not have the right to usurp the rights of weaker and poorer countries. God Almighty has clearly said that such cruelties only create division and conflict.

In the eyes of God, peace is a great and paramount objective, and so to establish it, if you occasionally have to sacrifice a smaller ideal then there is no harm, as it is for the greater good of mankind.

When permission for defensive war was first given in Islam, it was given with the reason that whilst Muslims truly desired peace, the disbelievers wished to destroy the peace. If permission to fight back had not been granted to the Muslims at that point then *all* religions would have been placed in grave danger. Allah the Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an:

*"Permission to fight is given to those against whom war is made, because they have been wronged and Allah, indeed, has power to help them."*

Those who have been driven out from their homes unjustly only because they said, 'Our Lord is Allah.' – And if Allah did not repel some people by means of others, there would surely have been pulled down





cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is oft commemorated. And Allah will surely help one who helps Him. Allah is, indeed, Powerful, Mighty.” (Chapter 22, Verse 40-41)

Thus, it is quite clear that Islam has made every effort to establish peace and every effort to protect all other religions. Even where defensive war was permitted to the Muslims, the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> gave extremely strict rules of engagement to the Muslim armies which they were compelled to abide by.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> taught that during wars only those people who were directly engaged in the war could be fought. He gave strict instructions that no innocent person was ever to be attacked. No woman, child or elderly person was ever to be attacked. He taught that no religious leader or priest could be attacked in his place of worship. The Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> further taught that no person could be forced or compelled to convert to Islam. He taught that when Muslims were forced to fight for the cause of peace they must not create fear or terror amongst the members of the public, nor should they be treated in a harsh or severe manner. He taught that prisoners of war should be treated with even greater care and attention than a person would pay to himself. He taught that buildings should not be targeted or destroyed and that trees should not be felled.

Thus even where conditions existed where war was justified, the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> gave countless guidelines and instructions to his followers which were essential to follow. I have only mentioned very few.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> said very clearly that whosoever acted against these rules of engagement would not be fighting in accordance to the commands of Allah to establish peace, but rather would be fighting for their own personal interests or gain.

Those who criticise the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> in today's world should reflect upon whether these instructions are being followed in any of the wars taking place today? Is it not the case that today horrific weapons are being used which

are causing innocent people to be killed indiscriminately?

Yet, the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> prohibited any form of collateral damage, to the extent that once during a war, a companion accidentally killed a child and this caused great displeasure to the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> who severely rebuked him for this act.

Another incident shows just how much respect the Holy Prophet Muhammad had for all of mankind. Once a funeral procession passed by and as a mark of respect he immediately stood up. Upon seeing this, a companion commented in surprise that:



“This is the funeral procession of a Jewish person.”

Hearing this, the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> said: “Was he not a human? Respect for all humans is obligatory”.

These are the characteristics and qualities which develop mutual respect in society and help develop peace.

Today's world is ever increasing in its criticism of Islam and its Founder, despite the fact that Islam's teachings and the Holy Prophet's every act were filled with love for humanity and a desire to establish peace in the world. Sadly, today's world does not see or understand what is really happening today.

As I have already said, the evil acts conducted by extremists claiming to be Muslims, have nothing to do with the real teachings of Islam. If there is oppression in Muslim countries or the rights of the public are being usurped then that too is completely contrary to the teachings of Islam. The Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> said that such cruelties were based only on vested interests and certainly

were not for the sake of God.

Bearing all of this in mind, the urgent need of the time is that instead of thinking ill or holding misconceptions about Islam, all those who desire peace should join together and discuss how cruel and unjust elements can be stopped.

Defaming or unjustly attacking Islam is not the right way. Leaving aside certain Muslim countries and groups, there are also non-Muslims who are conducting acts through which innocent people, women and children are losing their lives on the basis of ‘establishing peace’.

The direction the world is moving in suggests that the dark shadow of war is being cast over a very large part of the globe. If war breaks out then countless innocent women, children and elderly people will all die. The destruction will be greater than was witnessed in the previous two World Wars and I say this knowing full well that during the Second World War tens of millions of people lost their lives. The world's population is now far greater and there has also been a vast increase in both the number of weapons of mass destruction and the countries that

have developed a thirst for war. Under these circumstances destruction will be manifold.

In light of all of this, it is imperative that the world and particularly the major powers reflect upon what efforts are required to save the world from a horrific destruction.

Fear of Islam or attempts to defame it will not achieve anything or lead to peace and reconciliation. Instead, the key to peace is to stop cruelty and oppression wherever it occurs with justice and equality. Only when this principle is followed will global peace develop. This will only happen when the people of the world come to recognise their Creator.

It is my ardent hope and prayer that the entire world urgently comes to understand the needs of the time before it is too late.

At the end I would like to once again thank all of our guests who have taken the time and effort to come and attend this event.

May Allah bless you all. Thank you very much. ♦

# His Holiness

By Rob Eshman

From the Jewish Journal.com on

His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad

**B**efore His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad, leader of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, entered the gilded ballroom of the Montage Beverly Hills last Saturday afternoon, a spokesman took the microphone and explained the rules to the 500 or so acolytes, dignitaries and invited guests.

First, when His Holiness the *khalifa*, or spiritual leader, enters a room, it is customary to stand. Moreover, he said, His Holiness will not set foot inside until the audience is fully seated. Not just seated, he added, but quiet.

People sat. They kept still — no one even sipped their iced tea. The only person you could hear whispering was me.

I leaned to my tablemates, both followers of His Holiness, and said: “This is *so* not a Jewish audience.”

Estimates vary widely about the number of Ahmadiyya Muslims spread throughout the world. Some experts put the number at 13 million — about the same as the number of Jews in the world. The group itself claims 70 million followers. Either way it is a fraction of the 1.6 billion Muslims, though, by all accounts, growing.

The sect was founded in India in 1889, by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani, referred to as Promised Messiah, who preached nonviolence and claimed to be the second coming of the Messiah.

That belief set Ahmadis at odds with mainstream Muslims, who maintain that no messiah or prophet has succeeded Muhammad.

They are concentrated in Pakistan, South-east Asia and Africa, with just 30,000 Ahmadis residing in the United States. In Southern California they have two mosques, one in Chino, the other in Hawthorne.

In Pakistan, Ahmadis are not considered Muslims, and they are barred from voting. Attacks on the community in 2010 in Pakistan left 99 dead. Since 1984 the khalifa, or successor to the Promised Messiah, has resided in London. Security at the Montage was Israel-heavy.

“This cannot stop us from doing our assigned task,” Ahmad, who is the fifth khalifa, said during a press conference before his appearance. “We are the true Islam.”



***“I believe in that One God who is the Lord of all nations, all races and all religions, and so it becomes impossible that I could ever develop any hatred in my heart for any nation, any race or any religion.”***

On the tenth anniversary of the terror attacks of 9/11, Ahmadis in the United States started a blood drive that collected 12,000 units. Humanity First, a nonsectarian charity created by the fourth khalifa and run by the community as a volunteer organization, performs disaster relief worldwide. In his speeches, the khalifa stresses that “true Islam” equals peace.

Yes, even when it comes to Israel.

On Saturday, the khalifa singled out Israeli President Shimon Peres for praise in his vision of a new Middle East. There is a longstanding Ahmadi community in Haifa, as well. I asked Ahmadi spokesman Nasim Rehmatullah whether the khalifa supports the boycott of Israel.

“No, we don’t have that policy,” he said. “We treat them as normal human beings.”

Elected officials, eager to join hands with Muslims to demonstrate that they are anti-terror, not anti-Islam, gravitate toward the Ahmadiyya.

The khalifa was honored with many speeches by many federal, state and local representatives. Both Wendy Greuel and Eric Garcetti turned up, proving the khalifa’s peacemaking power.

Still, it’s not clear whether the Ahmadiyya community’s existence is proof that “true Islam” is a religion of peace, or whether their brutal persecution at the hands of fellow Muslims might just prove the opposite.

When the khalifa rose to speak, we rose too, then sat. He wore an ornate white turban and a black Nehru-style jacket. He spoke softly, in heavily accented Pakistani English. His followers were enthralled.

“I believe in that One God who is the Lord of all nations, all races and all religions, and so it becomes impossible that I could ever develop any hatred in my heart for any nation, any race or any religion,” he said.

No wonder Ahmadis are the West’s chosen Muslims.

In fact, it struck me that Ahmadiyya seems to have as much, or more, in common with late 19th century religious movements as it does with mainstream Islam.

Like the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it has a strict hierarchy; a zealous, upbeat proselytizing effort with sophisticated media; and a healthy system of tithing.

Like the liberal Jewish movements, Ahmadis stress their save-the-world projects — *tikkun olam*. They also emphasize secular achievement across gender lines. At my table, I was the only non-Ph.D.

Like Chabad, the driving force is devotion to one leader. Ahmadis flew in from around the world to see the khalifa in California. They are granted a few minutes in his presence, during which he will answer questions, offer advice, give blessings.

“I am a scientist,” Dr. Abdus Malik, a nephrologist who traveled from Columbus, Ohio, told me. “But I can’t explain it. Around him you feel a spiritual air. When you meet him you feel you’re being touched by a holy spirit.”

I can’t say I felt that — but I’m not predisposed. As a tribe, we Jews seem to both revere and resist leaders. A Jewish khalifa, a Jewish pope, sounds oxymoronic. With some exceptions, we who proclaim God’s Oneness are leery of Him speaking through one voice. “If we all pulled in one direction,” the Yiddish proverb goes, “the world would keel over.”

But we pay for our lack of blind devotion with constant contentiousness.

I don’t know whose is the “true Islam,” but disputation is, I’m sure, the true Judaism.

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*Abu Darda relates that he heard the Holy Prophet say: For him who adopts a path seeking knowledge, Allah eases the way to Paradise and angels spread their wings for a seeker of knowledge, being pleased with his occupation, and all that are in the heavens and the earth, including the fish in the water, ask for forgiveness for a learned one. A learned one is superior to a worshipper as the moon is superior to all the planets. The divines are heirs of the Prophets and the Prophets do not leave an inheritance of dirhams and dinars but only of knowledge. He who acquires knowledge acquires a vast portion.*

*(Abu Daud and Tirmidhi)*





# Concepts of Creation in Hinduism

Mubasher Ahmad, M.A., LL.B

In the main Hindu theology, three entities are eternal: God, Matter/ Maya and Soul. In other words, neither of the three is created. The universe is in a constant flux. The cycles of creation and destruction are a never-ending phenomenon. The 5,000 year old religious traditions with their roots stretching back to the Indus Valley civilization, are based on a major Hindu belief: reincarnation. Indeed, it is believed that this is not the first world, nor is it the first universe.

Although the Hindu triune God Parabrahman has three aspects – Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva the destroyer, yet, the creative work of Brahma does not constitute creating something out of nothingness. On the contrary, the soul and the material elements in nature (*Maya*) are deemed eternal and may only be mixed and merged together to generate various forms of creation. Brahma is considered as the womb where the birth of the universe takes place. As in the womb different elements mix together to take a new form of life, similarly Brahma nourishes the seed of universe that exists in it, and makes it grow and expand. However, with the passage of time this process of development and expansion starts deteriorating, and is taken over by god Vishnu for its ongoing sustenance and protection against forces of evil. In the end,

all is annihilated by god Shiva the destroyer, who then goes on to regenerate it. In this way, a new cycle of creation starts and thus the god Brahma continues his work of creation.

In a nutshell, the life of a universe is beyond imagination. One day to Brahma is longer than four thousand million of the years that we know. Every night when Brahma sleeps the world is destroyed. Every morning when he awakes it is created again. When Brahma of this universe has lived a lifetime of such days the universe is completely destroyed by Shiva. Everything disappears into the Supreme One. For an unimaginable period of time chaos and water alone exist. Then once again Vishnu appears, floating on the vast ocean. From Vishnu comes forth Brahma of the new universe and the cycle continues for ever.

It should not be assumed that as in Abrahamic faiths, the creator god Brahma did not himself come into being through a process of birth. In Hindu mythology even the creator god Brahma was born to a God. He is considered to be the son of the Supreme Being called Brahman. The Supreme God and the Supreme female energy called Maya consorted together to give birth to Brahma. To give birth to his son Brahma, the Supreme Being first created water and placed his seed in it; his seed then transformed into what is called the Golden Egg; and from the Golden Egg the god Brahma appeared<sup>1</sup>.

The creation story in Hinduism lies in mythology. In fact many cosmogonies can be found and an axiom<sup>2</sup> explains acceptance

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One day to Brahma is longer than four thousand million of the years that we know. Every night when Brahma sleeps the world is destroyed. Every morning when he awakes it is created again.

of the varied accounts: 'Truth is One; the sages call it by different names.' The most ancient of the Vedas – the Rig Veda– uses the term *Hiranyagarbha* to identify the cause of creation of the universe<sup>3</sup>. *Hiranya* means gold; and *Garbha* connotes seed, egg, womb or embryo. Thus, *hiryangarbha* carries the concept of Golden Egg, Golden Womb, or Golden Embryo. As an embryo is made up of

an egg and a sperm in its initial stage, the term *Hiranyagarbha* contains both feminine and masculine aspects. The Rig Veda describes it as the Celestial Egg that floated around in emptiness and the darkness of non-existence, and later it divided into two spheres – the outer portion, the shell, became the sky and its yolk turned into the sun. Other Hindu sacred literature such as the *Puranas* further developed this concept of creation, depicting that the fluid in the Celestial Egg became the ocean. A verse of the Rig Veda sums up this process of creation by saying:

“In the beginning was the Divinity in his splendor, manifested as the sole Lord of land, skies, water, space and that beneath, and He upheld the earth and the heaven.”<sup>4</sup>

According to other legends, a lotus flower came out of the navel of god Vishnu, and Brahma – the god of creation was born out of that lotus. That’s why Brahma is always shown standing or sitting on a lotus flower which in Hinduism is a symbol of life, fertility, ever renewing youth and beauty. In his images the god Brahma appears to be standing on a lotus flower with four heads. It is said that at birth, he had only one head; but on growing up, he fell in love with Srasvati and married her. He was so much in love with her that he wanted to see her all the time. For not missing to look at her wherever she was, he grew four heads – facing front, left, right and back. The legend tells us that he even grew a fifth head looking upwards; but the fifth head was cut off by god Shiva. Some Hindu scholars explain the depiction of four heads saying that it shows Brahma loves his creation very much, and keeps full awareness of all that is created and exists in all directions. Not only four heads, Brahma is also shown to have four hands. In one hand he is holding the Vedas, the source of all knowledge. In another he is holding a pot of water; and in the other two hands he holds a ladle and long stems of grass. The pot of water depicts that the source of all life is water. Many life-forms live in water and others depend on water for their lives. The spoon and the grass depict importance of giving and sharing the sources of life with others through acts of sacrifice<sup>5</sup>.

Another Hindu concept of creation (and destruction) is composed in the *Brahma-samhita*<sup>6</sup>. It says: The origin of the material creation is *Maha-Vishnu* (great Vishnu), who lies in the Cosmic Milk Ocean. While He sleeps in that ocean, millions of universes are generated as He exhales, and they are annihilated when He inhales. This *Maha-Vishnu* is a plenary portion of *Vishnu*, the preserver



of the universe.

As mentioned earlier, in Hinduism the nature or phenomenal universe (*Maya*) is eternal. In scriptures it is also known as *Prakriti*. “It is seen as an eternal reality that always existed and always will exist. That is to say, phenomenal reality is not a created entity; it is an eternal reality that always was and always will be”<sup>7</sup>. It is a force that not only creates, but also dissolves universes. Once a universe disappears, *Prakriti* becomes a dormant energy, but later it becomes active on its own and creates a new universe. Some Hindu traditions assert that *Purusha* and *Prakriti* are the only two principles that are primarily responsible for the creation. Initially the transcendent Divine named *Purusha* made the cosmic egg getting together with *Prakriti*, that is, nature. The world emerged from that egg. Another tradition says that first Brahma the creator came out from that egg, and later he created the universe. *Purusha* is divine being who existed before time, and he allowed himself

to be dismembered to create all reality. *Purusha*’s other name is *Prajapati* who is known to be “lord of all born beings.”<sup>(8)</sup>

It is said that literal interpretation of these creation mythologies would miss the intended point and the value of the various descriptions should not be judged by on how much they concur with or oppose science but on how well they depict a vision for living a productive and spiritual life. ♦

#### Endnotes

- (1) *Manu Smriti* 1.9.
- (2) *Rig Veda*: 1:164:46
- (3) *Rig Veda*: 10.121.
- (4) *Rig Veda* 10:121: Hiranyagarbha Sukta translated by Ralph T.H. Griffith.
- (5) *Hinduism* by Prabha Duneja, p. 312 under *Lord Brahma*.
- (6) *The Brahma-samhita* (5.48).
- (7) *Rig Veda* 10.90
- (8) *Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, edited by Constance A. Jones & James D. Ryan, p. 332 under *Prajapati*.



Man has continually struggled to understand his origins: where he came from, how the world formed, why he was created. Most religions offer answers to this spiritual quest of man and his unanswerable questions about the birth of creation in the form of creation myths, or symbolic stories describing how the universe and its inhabitants came to be<sup>1</sup>. Creation myths are symbolic narrative of the beginning of the world as understood in a particular tradition and community. Creation myths are of central importance for the valuation of the world, for the orientation of humans in the universe, and for the basic patterns of life and culture<sup>2</sup>. From the ancient religions of the Americas to the tribes of Africa and the cultures of the Far East, from ancient Egypt to the Greeks and Romans, creation myths have served as powerful tools for sacred history and a strengthening of faith for people of every age.

# Comprehending Our Origins: Creation Myths in Ancient Cultures

By Saadia Faruqi

**M**ythologists have divided creation myths into five classifications, with some myths falling into more than one classification:

1. From chaos or nothingness (*ex nihilo*)
2. From a cosmic egg or primal maternal mound
3. From world parents who are separated
4. From a process of earth-diving
5. From several stages of emergence from other worlds<sup>3</sup>

Each culture's myths are different from the others, fascinating beyond compare and beautiful expressions of their world view. I have chosen some of the more vivid ones for this article, although they are only the tip of the iceberg.

The ancient Egyptians are among the earliest civilizations known to man, with a culture steeped in the most vivid and elaborate of creation mythologies. Noted in the Pyramid Texts, these myths form the oldest religious texts in the world. The stories varied depending on the part of Egypt they originated from, but all have some common elements. They all



held that the world had arisen out of the lifeless waters of chaos, called *Nu*, and included a pyramid-shaped mound, called the *benben*, which was the first thing to emerge from the waters. The sun was said to have first risen from the mound, as the general sun-god Ra or as the god Khepri. There were many versions of the sun's emergence, and it was said to have emerged directly from the mound or from a lotus flower that grew from the mound, in the form of a heron, falcon, scarab beetle, or human child<sup>45</sup>.

The creation stories of the African nations are no less rich and colorful, with each tribe narrating their own creation myth. Similar to Egyptian myths, they vary based on the tribe or region where they originated. For instance, the Boshongo, a Bantu tribe of Central Africa, narrate that in the beginning there was only darkness, water, and the great god Bumba. One day Bumba, in pain from a stomach ache, vomited up the sun. The sun dried up some of the water, leaving land. Still in pain, Bumba vomited up the moon, the stars, and then some animals: the leopard, the crocodile, the turtle, and, finally, some men, one of whom, Yoko Lima was white like Bumba<sup>6</sup>. On the other hand, the creation myth of the Fon people of West Africa tell of Mawu, the moon being and mother of all the gods and humanity,



creating everything as she was carried from place to place on the back or in the mouth of Aido Hwedo, the rainbow serpent. The earth was created first, its curves, slopes and rises shaped by the winding, snaking motions of Aido Hwedo. Mountains formed from Aido Hwedo's excrement wherever they stopped to rest, leaving precious minerals inside. When Mawu finished, the mountains, trees, elephants and other creations left the world too heavy, so she asked Aido Hwedo to coil and encircle the earth and rest underneath to support its weight.<sup>7</sup>

Closer to home, the Americas have witnessed the rise and fall of many empires and religions. One of them was the Mayans, a sophisticated civilization with an equally beautiful creation story as narrated in the *Pupul Vuh*. The Maya gods Kukulkán (also known by the Aztec name Quetzalcoatl) and Tepeu, the Creators, the Forefathers or the Makers, decided to preserve their legacy by creating an Earth-bound species looking like them. The first attempt was man made from mud, but Tepeu and Kukulkán found that the mud crumbled. The two gods summoned the other gods, and together they decided to make man from wood. However, since these men had no soul and soon lost loyalty to the creators, the gods destroyed them by rain. Finally, man was constructed from maize, the Mayans staple and sacred food<sup>8</sup>.

The native tribes of North America have a wide variety of creation myths as well. As an example, the Cherokee creation belief describes the earth as a great floating island surrounded by seawater. It hangs from the sky by cords attached at the four cardinal points. The first earth came to be when a water beetle came from the sky realm to see what was below the water. He dived to the bottom of the water and brought up some soft mud. This mud expanded in every direction and became the earth. Other animals including the buzzard and the crawfish visited next. The first people on the new earth were a brother and sister<sup>9</sup>.

According to the Zoroastrian story of creation, Ahura Mazda existed in light in goodness above, while Angra Mainyu existed in darkness and ignorance below. They have existed independently of each other for all time, and manifest contrary substances. Ahura Mazda first created seven abstract heavenly beings called Amesha Spentas, who support him and represent beneficent aspects, along with numerous yazads, lesser beings worthy

of worship. He then created the universe itself in order to ensnare evil. Ahura Mazda created the floating, egg-shaped universe in two parts: first the spiritual (*menog*) and 3,000 years later, the physical (*getig*). He then created Gayomard, the archetypical perfect man, and the first bull<sup>10</sup>.

In the Far East, creation stories are very different. The Chinese creation story, recorded in ancient Chinese texts, narrates that in the beginning there was nothing in the universe except a formless chaos. However this chaos coalesced into a cosmic egg for about 18,000 years. Within it, the perfectly opposed principles of Yin and Yang became balanced and Pangu, a primitive, hairy giant, emerged from the egg and set about the task of creating the world. He separated Yin from Yang with a swing of his giant axe, creating the Earth and the Sky. To keep them separated he stood between them and pushed up the Sky. This task took 18,000 years. When Pangu died, his breath became the wind, mist and clouds; his voice the thunder; left eye the sun and right eye the moon; his head became the mountains and extremes of the world; his blood formed rivers; his muscles the fertile lands; his facial hair, the stars and milky way; his fur the bushes and forests; his bones the valuable minerals; his bone marrows sacred diamonds; his sweat fell as rain; and the fleas on his fur carried by the wind became the fish and animals throughout the land. Nüwa the Goddess then used the mud of the water bed to form the shape of humans. These humans were very smart since they were individually crafted. Nuwa then became bored of individually making every human so she started putting a rope in the water bed and letting the drops of mud that fell from it become new humans. These small drops became new humans, not as smart as the first<sup>11</sup>.

Arguably one of the most beautiful creation story is that of the Maori, the indigenous people of New Zealand. They narrate the arresting tale of Rangi and Papa the primordial parents who lie locked together in a tight embrace. They have many children, all of which are male, who are forced to live in the cramped darkness between them. The children grow and discuss among themselves what it would be like to live in the light. Tumatauenga, the fiercest of the children, proposes that the best solution to their predicament is to kill their parents. But his brother Tane disagrees, suggesting that it is better to push them apart, to

let Rangi be as a stranger to them in the sky above while Papa will remain below to nurture them. And so the children of Rangi and Papa see light and have space to move for the first time. But upon seeing the pain of their parents they start to fight among themselves. Tāne searched for heavenly bodies as lights so that his father would be appropriately dressed. He obtained the stars and threw them up, along with the moon and the sun. Rangi and Papa continue to grieve for each other to this day. Rangi's tears fall towards Papa to show how much he loves her. Sometimes Papa heaves and strains and almost breaks herself apart to reach her beloved partner again but it is to no avail. When mist rises from the forests, these are Papa's sighs as the warmth of her body yearns for Rangi and continues to nurture mankind<sup>12</sup>.

There is no doubt that creation myths define religious groups through shared sacred histories and their own unique world views. For the ancient world, these myths define people's culture and thought in the same way as the creation narrations of newer religions. They point to a need to believe in intelligent design, a process of evolution that begs a creator or even multiple creators. They are what separate us from animals yet allow us to share our history with animals, plants and even the soil of the earth. They enable us to make sense of the unfathomable process of creation and understand our place in the grand scheme of things. Creation myths are the very source of understanding our Creator and thus should be cherished and communicated. ♦

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Womack, Mari (2005). *Symbols and Meaning: A Concise Introduction*.

<sup>2</sup>Merriam-Webster (1999). Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of World Religions: Creation Myth

<sup>3</sup>Leonard, Scott A. McClure, Michael (2004). *Myth and Knowing*

<sup>4</sup>Fleming, Fergus; Alan Lothian (1997). *The Way to Eternity: Egyptian Myth*.

<sup>5</sup>Allen, James P. (2000). *Middle Egyptian: An Introduction to the Language and Culture of Hieroglyphs*.

<sup>6</sup>Sproul, Barbara C. (1979). *Primal Myths*.

<sup>7</sup>Courlander, Harold (2002). *A Treasury of African Folklore: The Oral Literature, Traditions, Myths, Legends, Epics, Tales, Recollections, Wisdom, Sayings, and Humor of Africa*.

<sup>8</sup>Goetz, Delia; Morley, Sylvanus Griswold (1950). *Popol Vuh: The Sacred Book of the Ancient Quiché Maya By Adrián Recinos*.

<sup>9</sup>Sproul, Barbara C. (1979). *Primal Myths*.

<sup>10</sup>Cavendish, Richard; Ling, Trevor Oswald (1980), *Mythology: an Illustrated Encyclopedia*.

<sup>11</sup>Derk Bodde (1961). "Myths of Ancient China" in *Mythologies of the Ancient World*.

<sup>12</sup>G. Grey (1956). *Polynesian Mythology*



# IN THE BEGINNING GOD

GENESIS 1:1

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

By Andleeb Shams Ahmed

**T**his opening chapter of the Bible, in Genesis, is the bedrock of Creationism. Most God-believing people affirm that the world and man were created by God and only God. However, science chooses to disagree with this, fueling the fire for those who do not believe that there is a higher spiritual being responsible for all that there is today. The story of the creation of the world and its material objects is simply laid out here. This article will focus on the explanation of Creationism as understood in Genesis.

The opening verses of the Bible in Genesis explains “day by day” how

God created all the universe....spiritually and materially. These words declare that all of creation, whether it be the seas, land, animals, plants or man, are a true imprint of a divine act.

As Genesis begins, we read that God created the earth and heaven. God also created light and darkness, light being “day” and darkness being “night.” In the Bible, it actually states that the earth was without form and filled with darkness. His creation of light is what would fill the earth with his creations, which are yet to come.<sup>1</sup>

God continued His work as he created the “sky,” separating the waters from above and below Heaven. Here it seems that water was already placed on earth (most likely from

when God first created earth), however, it states that he needed to separate the “waters.” This seems to be in reference to a water-like atmosphere, which God rightfully called “sky.”<sup>2</sup>

Next, God created land and the seas. He called the dry land “earth.” God also created plants, trees, grass and fruits. He not only created these vital earthly objects, but He planted the seeds in the earth for the vegetations to thrive and survive.<sup>3</sup>

God created the sun, moon and stars, ultimately the solar system. Essentially, He created light from “heaven,” which would serve as signs for seasons, days, and years.<sup>4</sup> Although this may not seem much in words, think about the magnitude



of what he created. Isaac Newton himself agrees that God made this awe-inspiring world. “This most beautiful system of the sun, planets and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being.”<sup>5</sup>

The next day, God created living creatures of the seas and winged birds of the skies. God blessed them to multiply life in the seas and skies.<sup>6</sup>

On day six, God created living creatures of the land. God also created man and woman and provided for them the world filled with creatures and cultivations for them to rule over, care for and cultivate. In these verses, it shows that man and woman were created together, not separately or at different times.<sup>7</sup> What should be noted here, is that the verse in Genesis does not declare that man and woman were created solely by God Himself. It states, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...”<sup>8</sup> Now, many Christian theologians understand the word “us” to be in reference to the Holy Trinity. However, its Judaic meaning can reference Angels, who are considered to be minor divine beings who surround God. Obviously, all verses of all books of all religions are open to interpretation. But it cannot be argued that it truly states in Genesis, that man and woman were created by a higher spiritual being, God. However, I also want to point out that these verses do not necessarily refer to the first man and woman on earth as being Adam and Eve, as most people agree that they were the first human beings created by God. God never refers to Adam and Eve until later in Genesis. The American Orthodox scholar, Peter Bouteneff, discusses the terminology of Genesis, in both Hebrew and Greek, pertaining to humankind. He feels that the words refer to humankind rather than a specific person. It isn’t until the second chapter of Genesis that God refers to “Adam” which is used for a particular person.<sup>9</sup>

As day six ends, the verses do show that God has completed His work and everything has been created. And he is pleased with His work.

As many religions believe, day seven showed that God blessed the world He created and rested for all the work He did, making the day holy, foreshadowing the

day of Sabbath as worshipped by most Jews today.<sup>10</sup>

At the end of these verses, there are two main points that were said throughout the words. Repeatedly, it states in Genesis that after making His creation, “God saw that it was good.” For example, in Genesis Chapter 1, Verse 12, it states: “And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed was in itself, after his kind; and God saw that it was good.” In fact, when God finished His work on day seven, it again says, “And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold it was very good.”<sup>11</sup> This shows that God was pleased with what He made and that He made all things that were “good,” or, in other words, pure and right.

The reason theologians have argued that it took exactly six days for God to make His world is because in Genesis it continuously states that after He created “day” and “night,” his completion of creating a new worldly being would end with the words “And the evening and the morning were the (second) day.” These words are written for exactly seven days. This is where a major debate arises. Is this exactly one “day,” a 24-hour period? Or is a “day” actually millions of years? If one believes in creationism, then the only one to answer this question is God Himself. No matter what the answer is it should be reminded that these verses of Genesis show us the origins of the universe, the solar system, the atmosphere, wildlife, and the origin of man and woman. In addition, in the first few verses of Genesis, we are introduced to God Himself and the world He created.

The second chapter of Genesis deals primarily with human life. Now this chapter does change the chronological order of when things were created by God. For example, man is created before any living creatures, however, in chapter one, man is created last. And in this chapter, man is named “Adam.” Chapter two of Genesis states that God did not want “man” to be alone on His earth, so then He created living creatures. “And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help made for him. And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them...” It should also

be noted that even though man has been created, woman was not created at the same time, yet later. However, in chapter one, man and woman were created together. This second chapter does not go into details of how the earth, waters, atmospheres, etc. were created. Therefore, it may not be fair to compare the two as different creation accounts. However, due to the fact that man is already created in the first chapter and then is re-created in the second chapter, it is hard not to compare.

The intent of Genesis is not to give exact and specific answers, especially pertaining to physics or any science, but to act as a lesson in the theological order of things. Creationism according to Genesis deals with a general description of the totality of what God made. The intention is not to provide a detailed scientific list of everything, but to clearly indicate that God made everything that exists, as well as ordering the things He made.

Creation according to Genesis illustrates not only how our world was made, but also introduces us to the highest spiritual guide for most religious people—God Himself. We can argue all day over what is true and what is not...whether it’s the time (“day”) factor or different chronological order of God’s creation. What only matters in reading these verses is that all of mankind and the entire universe was a scheme, a holy and righteous scheme, by a spiritual being, higher and not of this earth. Devout Genesis believers need not be worried about a dual authorship or conflicting ideas. Those who believe in these words wholeheartedly feel that these words are the true words of God. Then simply they can understand the message of creation and just know that the message and its source are divine. ♦

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Genesis 1:1-5

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 1:6-8

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 1:9-13

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 1:14-19

<sup>5</sup> Isaac Newton (“General Scholium,” in *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, Isaac Newton. 1687).

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 1:20-23

<sup>7</sup> Genesis 1:27

<sup>8</sup> Genesis 1:26

<sup>9</sup> Bouteneff, Peter, *Beginnings*, pgs. 5, 6, 10, 2008.

<sup>10</sup> Genesis 1:31

<sup>11</sup> Genesis 1:31

By Hassan Khan

## Conflict or Concordance?

In recent years, the creationism versus evolution controversy has received much attention. Christian fundamentalists have denied the validity of the theory of evolution, attempted to change school syllabi, and even taken the debate to civil courts. Atheists, in their own way, have used the theory to discredit Christianity and other religions. This controversy appears to be a classic case of conflict between science and religion.

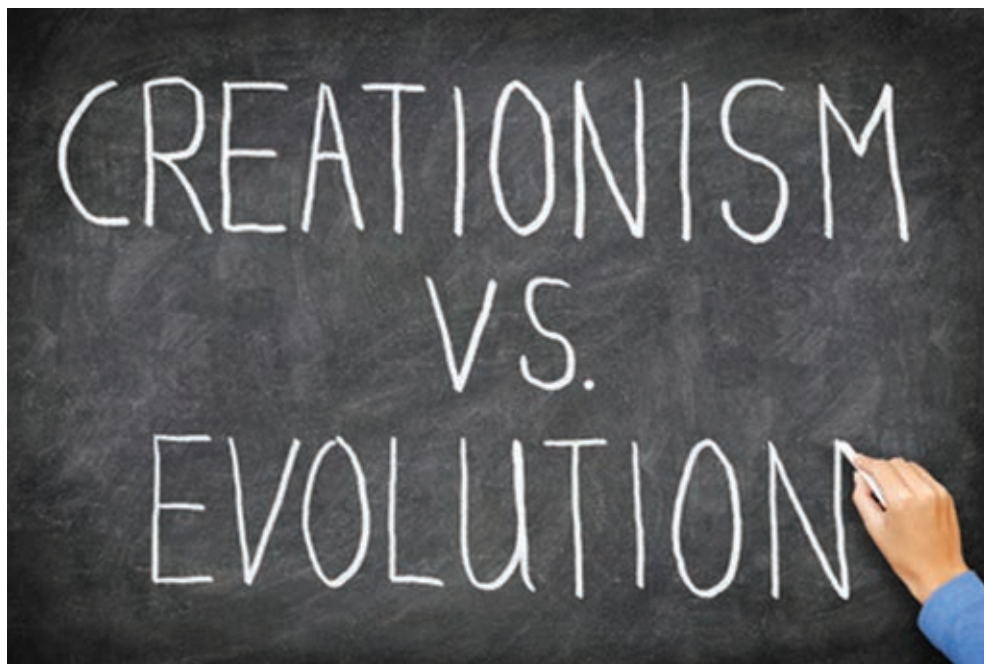
The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and other Ahmadi scholars have, however, always maintained that there is never a conflict between the Act of God and the Word of God. In other words, nature, and Islam's Holy Scripture, the Qur'an, do not contradict each other. Any apparent conflict arises because of the misunderstanding of scripture or nature. So what is the source of misunderstanding in this controversy? First, let us see what the two points of view are.

Creationism refers to the view that God created the universe out of nothing and then placed on earth different species of plants, animals and human beings. There is, of course, a wide range of opinions among creationists as to how this happened and the time scales involved. However, the central idea is the same, which is that a super natural being has brought into existence all life on earth through super natural processes.

Evolution, on the other hand, is the theory stating that the diverse life forms we see around us have all emerged as a result of natural processes. It asserts that complex organisms like human beings and other animals have evolved from simpler organisms through small modifications over a long period of time. Evolution, a scientific theory first expressed by Charles Darwin in 1859, is considered to be on par with Newton's laws of motions, Einstein's theory of relativity and quantum mechanics.

## Science or Philosophy?

As with all scientific theories, the theory of evolution does not make any predictions about the existence of God. It merely explains certain observed facts in the simplest possible terms. However, philosophers in every age have used scientific knowledge available to



**The Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and other Ahmadi scholars have, however, always maintained that there is never a conflict between the Act of God and the Word of God.**

them to gain insight into the metaphysical.

Newton's laws which are confined to explaining the motion of bodies, for example, gave rise to the philosophy of determinism. This school of philosophy stated that everything that happens in the universe is determined by a set of mathematical equations. There is no free will and God, if He exists at all, does not alter the course of events even if prayers are made to avert catastrophes.

Not all scientific theories lead to Godlessness though. The Big Bang theory was hailed by many as proof of the existence of a creator as it showed that the universe is not eternal and in fact had a definite beginning. The quantum theory is also considered to have dealt a blow to the philosophy of determinism. It states that at the most fundamental level, the events in our universe cannot be predicted by any physical laws.

In the same way the theory of evolution has led many thinkers to make inferences that are considered to be in the domain of religion. Since materialism prevails in our time, the philosophy it has given birth to is atheistic and anti-religious. In the early part of the

twentieth century it even gave rise to eugenics and fascism. In another time, perhaps, the philosophy of racial equality or environmental stewardship may have benefitted from it.

## Religion discredited?

The first controversial inference that is drawn from the theory of evolution by modern philosophers is that religions are mere fabrications of human mind. Most Christians and Muslims, for example, hold the belief that God created the first human being, Adam, from dust, and breathed into him His spirit so that Adam came to life. This doctrine is in conflict with the theory of evolution and therefore implies that these two religions and probably the rest of the religions as well are false.

It turns out, however, that the Holy Scripture of Islam, the Qur'an, never refers to Adam as the first man to walk the earth. Muslims have erred in understanding their own scripture. The Qur'an speaks of creation in stages as has been pointed out by many eminent scholars of Islam and Ahmadiyyat. In his book, *Sair-e-Rohani*, the second suc-



cessor to the founder of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hadrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmood Ahmad<sup>ra</sup> quotes the Qur'an:

"What is the matter with you that you expect not wisdom and staidness from Allah? And He has created you in *different* forms and *different* conditions...And Allah has caused you to grow as a *good* growth from the earth"(71:14-19).

The objection that religious doctrines contradict the observed facts of evolution therefore does not apply to Islam. This can be shown for Islam in part because the text of the Qur'an has been preserved. Perhaps, if the Bible was still available in its original form, it could be vindicated in the same way.

### Is there a Designer?

The second inference that is drawn from the theory of evolution is that God probably does not exist. For centuries, it was believed that the complexity and diversity of organisms on earth can only be explained if there was an all-powerful designer to create them. Now that the theory of evolution has described a natural process by which complex organisms can evolve from simpler organisms, it can therefore be presumed that God does not exist.

Such an inference may only appeal to people that are already inclined towards atheism. It is fraught with problems. Philosophers argue that complex organisms can come about because nature follows the principle of evolution. This principle is eternal and seems to just exist in the universe. In his book, "Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth", Hadrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad<sup>th</sup>, the fourth successor to the founder of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community writes that this "is only

an attempt to replace an unknown conscious creator (God) with an unconscious blind principle of Darwinism. Only those scholars can agree with this proposition who, despite their great knowledge and dedication to rationality, set them aside momentarily to escape the reality of God."

In short, the theory of evolution on its own cannot be used to suggest that the universe is not governed by a conscious God but an unconscious grand scientific principle such as evolution.

### Are humans an accident of nature?

Another controversy is over the inference that human beings are here on earth by accident. It is argued that human beings are a product of a mindless natural process. Moreover, random and chance events factor into the theory of evolution for example through random gene mutations. Therefore, human beings could have easily not evolved into their present physical or intellectual form.

The theory of evolution by itself does not support such a conclusion. No one can replay the past to show that life could have easily developed in any other direction without human beings. The implications and interpretation of randomness in nature are still under debate by scientists. All that has been shown with experiments in the lab is that certain events in nature cannot be predicted with certainty. Such experiments have allowed for interesting philosophical arguments for both in favor of as well as against religion. Nothing can be conclusively said about what would happen if the process of evolution was repeated from beginning.

### Conclusion

It appears that there is no conflict between science and religion, at least, in the faith as taught by the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community,.. As a consequence, Ahmadis believe that human beings were created through a gradual process of evolution. Adam<sup>as</sup> was not the first man but the first prophet of God. At the same time, Ahmadis also believe in the existence of an All-Powerful and All-Knowing God who supervises the workings of the universe through natural laws that He has Himself put in place. Ahmadis also believe that God listens to and responds to the supplications of those who turn to him sincerely.

In general, questions like, is there a God and why we are here, are outside the domain of science. Science is only concerned with the interaction of material things. It cannot provide conclusive answers to these metaphysical questions. However, this does not stop philosophers or religious scholars from drawing inferences from scientific discoveries. Modern philosophers attempt to advance arguments for materialism while religious scholars do so for their own faith. There is nothing wrong with this exercise. In fact, the Qur'an repeatedly encourages seekers of truth to reflect on the world. This shows that the Qur'an is confident that the study of the natural world will draw people towards God and not away. It says in the Qur'an:

"Verily in the creation of the heavens and of the earth, and in the alternation of the night and of the day, are there signs for men of understanding. They who, standing, sitting or reclining, bear Allah in mind and reflect on the creation of the Heavens and of the earth, saying: 'Oh our Lord! Thou hast not created this in vain'" (3:189-190).

**It appears that there is no conflict between science and religion, at least, in the faith as taught by the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community,.. As a consequence, Ahmadis believe that human beings were created through a gradual process of evolution. Adam<sup>as</sup> was not the first man but the first prophet of God.**

Islam teaches us that the purpose of humanity's creation is to worship the One True God, whom we refer to as Allah. And what is meant by worship? Worship, of course, is not merely a ritual conduct. In its true sense, it is a spiritual one and in the Islamic context it is one characterized by obedience, loyalty and love. Yet how is one meant to submit her/himself to such an extent to any cause and/or being? The answer is simple enough: by learning about it and through the course of learning, deeming it worthy of total submission.

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# The Islamic Teaching about Allah, Creator of the Universes

By Rabia Munawar Mir

**A**llah cannot be perceived through our five physical senses. So how are we to learn of Him? How are we, mere mortals, meant to comprehend the Glory and Majesty of the Creator of the Universes? Allah tells us in the Holy Qur'an that we can come to an understanding of the Wonder and Grandeur of His Being by studying His creation:

*In the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of the night and the day there are indeed Signs for men of understanding; Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and ponder over the creation of the heavens and the earth...(Qur'an, 3:191-192).*

Thus, to understand Islam's teaching about Allah, Creator of the Universes, it is imperative to understand His Creation.<sup>1</sup> Now, while language refers to all of creation as the universe, the fact is that this singular Universe which we inhabit is composed of a multitude of universes. And while it is believed that there may be other worlds or universes "out there" which we are not yet aware of, for the purpose of this article, the concept of "universes" will be restricted to the separate but interlinked spheres of creation, and each sphere will be given its due regard as a micro-world, as a fully functioning universe within itself, i.e. the heavens, the earth and the spiritual realm.

In Verses 7-9 of Chapter 50 of the Qur'an, Allah says:

Have they not looked at the sky above them, how We have made it and adorned it, and there are no flaws in it? And the earth

— We have spread it out, and placed therein firm mountains; and We have made to grow therein every kind of beautiful species, As a means of enlightenment and as a reminder to every servant that turns to God.

And in Verse 39 of Chapter 44:

And We created not the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, in sport.

As Muslims, we hold firm the belief that Allah created the entire Universe for a purpose and for the benefit of mankind, His most eminent creation. It is safe to say that the precise nature of this intended purpose generally eludes us, but we can say with conviction that there are at least two reasons, that we know of, that provide some insight into the purpose of creation. First and foremost, we know that to create is in Allah's nature. It is an attribute of His that He is the Creator and the Sovereign over His creation. The second reason for creation is that so we, as humanity, may be able to know the Majestic, Powerful, and Glorious being that is Allah, and thus become truly enamored by His Being and truly worship His Grandeur. Mankind can be a witness to God's attributes and thus of God Himself by way of studying the Universe, for the harmony and perfection that characterize the cosmos are reflective of the harmonious and perfect nature of their Creator:

*Blessed is He in Whose hand is the kingdom, and He has power over all things; Who has created death and life that He might try you — which of you is best in deeds; and He is the Mighty, the Most Forgiving. Who has created seven heavens in harmony. No incongruity canst thou see in the creation of the Gracious God. Then look again: Seest thou*

*any flaw? Aye, look again, and yet again, thy sight will only return unto thee confused and fatigued. (Qur'an, 67:2-5)*

This system of the cosmos is also amazing and awe-inspiring because of its observance of certain laws, which have now become known as the laws of physics. But it is astonishing to note that these laws govern all things in the Universe, in a uniform manner, through and through. One very simple and well known law is based on the force of gravity. Gravity ensures that all smaller heavenly bodies remain within the orbit of surrounding larger heavenly bodies. Scientists describe gravity as a force based on mass and pull,<sup>2</sup> but they cannot explain precisely how the law came into being and why it is maintained, i.e. what compels the law of gravity to function as it does. As Muslims, we believe it is the Will of Allah, who is the Compeller, that abides at the heart of all such laws, and it is the Greatness of such a God, whose creation is so harmonious and so awe-inspiringly beautiful that compels Hadrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad<sup>ra</sup> to write in his book *Our God*:

The study of the cosmic system under which billions of heavenly bodies are rotating throws one's mind in a spin. Every star revolves in its own orbit according to certain laws. It is impossible for a star to leave its orbit and enter the orbit of another star.<sup>3</sup>

He goes on to write:

*This rule does not merely apply only to the heavenly bodies alone, for everything in the universe is kept within its own limits. Nothing has the power to free itself from its own sphere and interfere in another. Fire is meant to burn. Water has to put out fire. A tree stands in one place. A bird will fly in the air. Man walks on*



earth. A fish swims. A cow has to eat grass. A tiger eats other animals. These are but a few crude examples. Everything is constrained within its own sphere which it is not allowed to leave. Everything fulfils a certain purpose.<sup>4</sup>

Hadrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad's assessment underscores not only the vast variety of life on earth, but also the multiple spheres of existence which abide in the natural world. How each sphere even as it operates within the bounds of its own limits, interacts effectively, efficiently and most intricately with other spheres. We've all heard the old adage that the flutter of a butterfly's wings in one part of the globe can cause a hurricane in another part of the globe. The idea behind this adage is testament to the complexity and intricacy of planet earth where even as each continent's ecosystem differs from that of others, they are each connected in a web of cause and effect, not randomly nor miraculously but through subtle and significant laws that run uniformly and harmoniously throughout the natural world, demanding a reaction of amazement and admiration from any intelligent onlooker with a keen eye.

Ahmad<sup>5a</sup> then goes on to mention Qur'anic verses that are indicative of an extraordinary system of cause and effect, which proves and highlights the existence of an Intelligent Creator, Whose Perfection, Symmetry and Beauty in creation is worthy of adulation, indeed, is worthy of worship, as these verses underscore the astonishing wonder of the natural world:

*And thy Lord has inspired the bee, saying, 'Make thou houses in the hills and in the trees and in the trellises which they build. Then eat of every kind of fruit, and follow the ways of thy Lord that have been made easy for thee.' There comes forth from their bellies a drink of varying hues. Therein is cure for men. Surely, in that is a Sign for a people who reflect.* (Qur'an, 16:69)

That Allah has provided each creature with a code of conduct, which is commonly referred to as instinct that causes every creature on earth to behave in a certain way and thus fulfill its purpose, is evidence of an immensely Powerful God, Whose will cannot be swayed and Whose Power whether apparent as the cosmos themselves or so subtle as to harness the will of an insect should be a great eye opener for mankind and should evoke great fear and humility and thus provide us with the fundamentals of our worship of our Lord.

And also evocative of great fear and humility should be the ease with which Allah can cause the pure to pass through the impure and

***“All that is in the heavens is God’s creation. Just as God is the Creator of all that exists in the physical world, the spiritual world is also pressed into service by Him and all this demands that we worship the One God.”***

to remain pure and to then become a source of nourishment for His creation:

*And surely in the cattle too there is a lesson for you. We give you to drink of what is in their bellies, from betwixt the faeces and the blood, milk pure and pleasant for those who drink it.* (Qur'an 16:67)

As Allah has made a system of nourishment for mankind from His various creatures so that all of man's physical needs may be fulfilled, He has likewise provided means of spiritual fulfillment. Hadrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad<sup>5ba</sup> says in his Friday sermon dated May 7, 2010:

“All that is in the heavens is God's creation. Just as God is the Creator of all that exists in the physical world, the spiritual world is also pressed into service by Him and all this demands that we worship the One God.”<sup>5</sup>

Hudur goes on to explain that precisely as Allah has sent down rains which cause

vegetation to grow in the earth, likewise has Allah ordained spiritual rains which stimulate spiritual growth. Such rains take the form of prophets by following whose instruction and example, mankind achieves spiritual progress and success.<sup>6</sup> Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>, the greatest of all the prophets, proved the single most pervasive and effective source of nourishment for humanity, as ordained by Allah the Almighty. And when the lands of Islamic faith threatened to become arid, Allah sent, in His Wisdom, the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, whose person and teachings are causing another flourishing of faith, wherein spiritual vegetation is sprouting and spreading and the weeds are being rooted out.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, Allah sends forth His prophets and *Khulafaa* as sources of nourishment, as a form of provision for our spiritual flourishing so that we may come to know the One True God, and worship Him and Him alone. All praise belongs to Allah. But how can we truly proclaim this if we do not know Allah, if we do not know the complexity and immensity of His Creation?

Allah demands of humanity that we aspire to learn about Him through His creation and come to be inspired with great awe, love and humility at His Munificence. Allah has subjected the heavens and the earth for the benefit of mankind so that we might learn of our Lord, His Power, His Beauty, and His all-encompassing Mercy and turn to Him and worship Him alone. And through His prophets and books, He has ordained the proper methods of worship, so that we may pay homage to Him, the Creator of the Universes:

*The seven heavens and the earth and those that are therein extol His glory; and there is not a thing but glorifies Him with His praise; but you understand not their glorification* (Qur'an, 17:45)

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Ahmad, Hadrat Mirza Bashir. *Our God: Proving the Existence of God by Rational Means*. Tilford, Surrey: Islam International Publications Ltd., 2007; p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> Wikipedia, Gravitation, <http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Gravitation>

<sup>3</sup> Ahmad, Hadrat Mirza Bashir. *Our God: Proving the Existence of God by Rational Means*. Tilford, Surrey: Islam International Publications Ltd., 2007, p. 63.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Hadrat Khalifat-ul-Masih V, Friday sermon, 7 May 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

Ayadh Ibn Himar relates that the Holy Prophet said: Allah has revealed to me that you should be humble, so that no one transgresses against another, no one holds himself above another. (Muslim)



**MUHAMMAD**  
**PEACE**  
**LOVING**   
**IS MERCIFUL**  
**PROMOTES**  
**HELP**  
**CHARITY**  
**HUMAN RIGHTS**  
**SOCIAL**  
**JUSTICE**  
**FORGIVER**  
**PIOUS**  
**MERCY**  
**TRUTH**  
**AID**  
**HUMBLE**  
**WOMEN**  
**RIGHTS**  
**TRUSTWORTHY**  
**EDUCATION**  
**PURE**  
**KIND**  
**COMPASSIONATE**  
**PROPHET**  
**NOBLE**

**A**bdur Rahman ibn Samurah relates that the Holy Prophet said to him: Do not ask for public office. If you are given it without asking you will be helped in discharging its responsibilities, but if you are given it on asking for it you will be its captive. If you vow to do a thing and then find a better alternative adopt the latter and expiate your vow. (Bukhari and Muslim)

Jabir relates that the Holy Prophet said: Allah will have mercy on a man who is easy when he sells and when he buys and when he demands the discharge of an obligation due to him. (Bukhari)



## In Praise of the Lord of the Worlds

By the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>  
Translated by Shazia Sohail

How distinct is the glow of the Source of all light  
The whole world is becoming a mirror for the eyes

I was anguished when I saw the moon yesterday  
For there was in it a hint of my Friend's grace

The joy from that beauty is surging in our heart  
Don't even mention to us the Turk or Tartar

A wondrous display of Your glory is all around  
Everywhere we look is the path where You are found

In the blazing sun Your bounties are displayed  
In each and every star Your radiance is arrayed

You placed a longing in the soul with Your own hand  
Thus, clamorous is the love of Your humble fans

In every particle You have placed amazing properties  
Who can read the whole volume of these mysteries

The limits of Your powers no one can imagine  
The tangle of this tough knot, who can unravel

A hint of Your beauty lies in beautiful persons  
Your heavenly tint infuses every bloom and garden

The blissful eyes of the virtuous always reveal You  
The hands of every humble worshiper point to You

Numerous veils hinder those who are blind of eye  
Or else the pagan and believer would turn to You alike

Your lovely gaze, my Beloved, is a sharp sword  
That cuts away the problem of pain from the foe

To meet with You, with dirt I have become as one  
Perhaps the pain of separation might soften

Without You, even a wink of rest eludes me  
My life ebbs as the ebbing heartbeat of the ailing

Why is Your street noisy, check right away  
Or a love-crazed person might pass away

# Q&A

## *What is the difference between Ahmadi Muslims and other Muslims?*

**A**hmadi Muslims follow the same holy scriptures and teachings as other Muslims. The key difference is that Ahmadi Muslims believe that the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup> (also referred to as the Mahdi in some texts) of the latter days has arrived and he established the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in 1889. It is a revivalist movement that has no new religious laws or teachings as it seeks to rejuvenate the true Islam as taught by the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>. Other Muslims are still waiting for a reformer to come.

As with all other Muslims, Ahmadi Muslims believe in the 'Five Pillars of Islam', and the 'Six Articles of Faith'. They follow the same holy scripture (The Holy Qur'an), and accept that Islam is the final and perfect religion for mankind. They also believe in Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup> as Khataman Nabiyyeen (the 'Seal of the Prophets') as he was the one who was the best model for mankind who brought God's final and perfect message for mankind.

Ahmadi Muslims also follow the Islamic sources of guidance and jurisprudence—which is sourced from three main authorities:

The Holy Qur'an;

The Sunnah (practice of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>); and The Hadith (sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>) as given in the authentic books of Hadith such as Sahih Al Bukhari, Sahih Al Muslim, Sunan Abu Daud, Tirmidhi, Ibne Maja and Nisai (Ahmadi Muslims also have regard for the interpretation of Islamic Laws (shariah) provided by the classical Islamic scholars. They generally

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**Ahmadi Muslims believe that the messiah who was promised has come and that he was a single person who fulfilled all the prophecies relating to such a messiah not just in Islam but also in all religions.**

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follow the Hanafi school of thought, but all such matters are considered in light of the guidance provided by the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>).

Despite this abundance of guidance Muslims, like followers of all religions before them, were destined to drift away from the true teachings of Islam. This decay was to be followed by the revival of Islam through the messiah of the latter days as prophesied by the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>. So whilst all Muslims expect a messiah to appear it is only the question of the identity and acceptance of the messiah that distinguishes Ahmadi Mus-

lims from all other Muslims.

In some Hadith the messiah is referred to as 'Jesus son of Mary' and in others he is referred to as 'Al-Mahdi'.

It is interesting to note that there are also similar such prophecies in other religions that tell of a messiah who was to appear in the 'latter days'; for example, Christians are awaiting the second advent of Jesus(as).

Ahmadi Muslims believe that the messiah who was promised has come and that he was a single person who fulfilled all the prophecies relating to such a messiah not just in Islam but also in all religions. This was to be a unifying factor for all humanity and a means of uniting people under Islam, as it is the perfect religion for man.

Ahmadi Muslims believe that the Promised Messiah was Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad<sup>as</sup> who was born in Qadian, India and under Divine guidance he established the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in 1889. The community seeks to revive the same spirit and understanding of Islam that existed at the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad<sup>sa</sup>.

Some other Muslims on the other hand believe that the Promised Messiah has not yet arrived and that when he does he will be the very same Jesus Son of Mary who was sent to the Jews over 2000 years earlier as the Messiah. They believe that he ascended bodily to heaven and that he will return to earth bodily as a sign signifying his second advent. They further believe that he will slaughter all the pigs on earth and break all crosses. According to them he will also force everyone to accept Islam.

Ahmadi Muslims believe that such prophecies are metaphorical in nature. So, for example, the Messiah was not to force people to accept Islam, but rather the force of his arguments, reasoning and spiritual insight would demonstrate the truth of Islam and attract people to Islam.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is now established globally with branches in over 180 countries and its membership is in tens of millions. It is a peace loving community that believes in and acts upon its principle of 'Love for All, Hatred for None', a principle that reflects the essence of Islam.

**Source: <http://www.islamicfaq.org/islam/index.html#Q12>**



# Penal System In Islam

*By Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad*

**C**hristian critics often ask questions about penalties prescribed by Islam for various offences. Evidently they think these penalties to be too severe and want to know why this is so. They are especially critical about the cutting off of hands prescribed in the Qur'an as punishment for theft. It seems appropriate, therefore, briefly to state the teaching of Islam on the subject.

1. The penal system of Islam is basically different from the penal system current in the West today. Unless we keep this basic difference in view, we cannot hope to comprehend the differences which arise in the detailed application of the two systems.

2. Islam prescribes capital punishment for murder. But this is modified if the relatives of the murdered person are willing to forgive the murderer in return for a monetary compensation (2:179). But even so, it is the duty of the State to see that the offer of forgiveness is genuine and without any constraint or pressure. The State must also see that the commutation of the death penalty is likely to result in a general improvement not only in the relations between the parties concerned but also in the crime rate of society (42:41).

3. The common impression that the Qur'an has prescribed "stoning" as punishment for a married adulterer or a married adulteress is wrong and unfounded. No such punishment is mentioned in the Qur'an. If such punishment had really been intended, it would have found unmistakable expression in the Holy Book, the more so when the lighter punishment of flogging, said to apply to unmarried persons, has been clearly mentioned therein. This lighter punishment, we must also remember, is mentioned in the Qur'an in connection with an alleged incident relating to a married woman (24:3 and Bukhari).



4. The punishment of apostasy by death has no sanction in Islam, What is often wrongly taken as punishment for apostasy is really punishment for treachery and sedition. In the early days of Islam apostasy and sedition went hand in hand, so they were confused with each other. The mistake which many people make is due to this confusion (5:34).

5. The cutting off of hands and feet prescribed for dacoits [i.e., armed thieves] and rebels in the Qur'an is meant only for those offenders who commit such barbarities against innocent people (5:34 and Bukhari). Says the Qur'an: "There is life for you in the law of retaliation, O men of understanding that

you may enjoy security" (2:180). But even such dacoits and rebels are to be pardoned if they repent before their arrest (5:35).

6. Perhaps the only penalty which needs some explanation is the cutting of the hands as punishment for theft. But in the light of the penal principles ordained by Islam, the explanation of this penalty also should not be a difficult matter. We should particularly keep the following points in view:

(a) Islam believes in the suppression of crime through exemplary punishment. Indeed only such punishment can prove an effective deterrent. Against this, the present penal system of the West is impressed by false emo-

tions and adopts ineffective penalties that take too long to administer. This tends to promote crime instead of checking and controlling it.

(b) Islam considers the moral health of society much more important than the bodily integrity of individuals and this is the only natural and rational view. Against this, the penal system of the West hesitates to deal effectively with the individual criminal, the hesitation resulting in the moral ill-health of society as a whole. No rational person can fail to see that the moral welfare of a community or society as a whole is much more important than the physical welfare of an individual. Compassion to the individual should not lead us to sacrifice the basic interests of society. If we did so, we should be yielding to false emotions, the evil consequences of which are writ large on the pages of history.

(c) The saying of Jesus<sup>as</sup> that 'A tree is known by its fruit', should also help us to arrive at a true understanding of the subject. It is well known that in countries in which Islamic penalties have been effectively introduced crime has invariably recorded a sharp decline. Under other penal systems however crime only tends to multiply. The difference is so marked that no comment is necessary.

(d) It may also be of interest to quote here another very pertinent saying of Jesus Christ<sup>as</sup>:

"And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell"(Matthew 5:30).

(e) Some misapprehension on the subject seems also to arise because of the fact that those who are critical about the Muslim teaching on the subject have in view the very large number and variety of crime prevalent in modern society. To this number and variety of crime they imaginatively apply penalties prescribed by Islam. The resulting picture is as shocking as it is imaginary. It leads one to think that under the Islamic system a very large number of human beings will go about with their hands cut off. This gives an entirely false picture. Psychologically, it would be more correct to think of one or two early offenders earning the extreme penalty of loss of hand, after which we may be certain that the crime punishable with loss of hand will cease to occur. This is what actually happens under the Islamic system.

7. In spite of what has been said above it would be wrong to think that Islam punishes every kind of theft with the cutting off of hand. It is generally forgotten that in the

practical administration of this penalty Islam has provided safeguards and limitations which are of the essence of wisdom. Briefly these safeguards and limitations are:

(a) Theft of food sufficient only to keep a human being alive will not result in this penalty. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> never proposed the cutting of hand for theft of fruit or other edibles (Muatta and Tirmidhi). Similarly if during a journey a person commits a theft because he has come to the end of his resources, he will not be punished with the cutting of hand (Abu Daud), though he may have some other punishment.

(b) To earn the extreme penalty of losing a hand the theft must be of considerable value. For articles of little value the crime will not merit the extreme penalty. It must be a serious case of theft (Bukhari and Muslim).

(c) In case of doubt or uncertainty—for instance, when theft is of property possessed by the culprit is common with others—the extreme penalty will not be applied, even if the amount of theft is greater than the culprit's lawful share. The same principle applies to spoils of war. The Holy Prophet<sup>sa</sup> would never award extreme penalty to a soldier who committed this delinquency (Tirmidhi).

(d) To help oneself to things belonging to near relatives would not be theft. Hind, the wife of Abu Sufyan, was not dubbed a thief when she told the Prophet<sup>sa</sup> that within reasonable limits, she sometimes manipulated her husband's property without his permission (Tabari). Umar<sup>ra</sup>, the second Khalifa of Islam, also refused to award the extreme punishment to one who stole from the State treasury. Such an offender may however merit some other punishment.

(e) Children who have not yet attained to the status of adults as well as persons who are mentally deficient are also exempted from the extreme penalty.

(f) We also find in the Hadith that one who grabs from another or snatches away a thing because the other is not sufficiently alert will not merit the penalty of theft, nor a person who commits a breach of trust (Tirmidhi). Such persons would have other appropriate punishments.

(g) A person who repents before his arrest for theft, and makes proper amends will also escape the extreme penalty of theft (Tirmidhi).

8. The present controversy in the West over capital punishment is also relevant to our present study. Some time ago, capital punishment was abolished in some of the American States. The result of the experiment is well

known. Crime increased and capital punishment had to be restored. The moral of this is obvious.

9. The law of Moses<sup>as</sup> accepted as a revealed law by all Christians prescribed penalties that are definitely severer than those prescribed by Islam. Yet, of this law. Jesus said: "I have come not to destroy but to fulfill." If this is so, those at least who accept the books of Moses<sup>as</sup> and Jesus<sup>as</sup> as their religious books cannot find fault with penalties enjoined by Islam.

10. Even if the penalties prescribed by Islam are considered too severe by some, they should at least remember that these penalties are meant to lead to the eradication of crime and evil, and prevent them from taking deep root.

11. It may also interest some to know that among later Muslim jurists there are some who think that the cutting of hand as prescribed by the Qur'an is to be understood in a metaphorical sense i.e. seizing the hand of a culprit by restraining him in other suitable manners (imprisonment etc.). It is however difficult to accept this explanation.

12. The last question relates to the general law of retaliation, eye for an eye, nose for a nose, ear for an ear, tooth for a tooth and so on. In the first place we must remember that the Qur'anic verse on this subject really cites the Mosaic law, not its own (5:46). Besides, as pointed out in the general teaching of Islam the law lays down a legitimate canon of retaliation without which there can be no peace in society. This law will however be subject to the basic Qur'anic teaching already stated, viz:

(a) "There is life for you in the law of retaliation, O Men of understanding that you may enjoy security" (2:180).

(b) "But whoso forgives and his act of forgiveness results in reform and improvement of relations, he will have his reward with Allah" (42:39). ♦

*Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad<sup>ra</sup> is the second son of the Promised Messiah<sup>as</sup>, Hazrat Ahmad, founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement. He is an eminent author known for his scholarly and careful analysis of religious problems. In the Ahmadiyya Movement, in particular, and among the Muslims in general, he holds great respect for his extremely valuable contributions to Islamic literature.*





## Mosque opened by Khalifa in Canada

Hundreds of people attended the opening of the Baitur Rahman mosque in Delta, described as the largest Ahmadiyya Muslim house of worship in British Columbia. The Ahmadiyya movement — a branch of Islam — was founded 100 years ago, originating with the teachings of Indian villager Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and is renowned today for promoting a peaceful coexistence with people of all faiths and cultures.

The community's world leader, His Holiness Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, inaugurated the mosque on Friday by delivering his weekly sermon from Delta. More than 3,000 worshippers attended the sermon, many of whom had travelled across Canada to attend the opening, said a statement from the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat (Community) Canada. Reprinted with permission from CBCnews.com.

## A Muslim mother's message of peace

**S**hocked and dumbfounded, I turned the news on to see for myself the terrible bombings at the Boston Marathon. As the news unfolded, it was apparent that the suspects had been disillusioned and used Islam as a vehicle for their “Jihad” agenda, and I was stunned to see their hijab clad mother at a press conference. Bad news for Islam.

As a Muslim mother, in this scenario, I see two very troubled young men struggling with their identities and ultimately sinning against their country and mankind. If they were taught the teachings of the true peaceful Islam like I have, they would definitely not become killers.

Despite terrorists using Islam for their “Jihad” agenda, I am teaching my children to keep strong on the right path, to serve humanity and that loyalty to one’s homeland is a part of the Islamic teaching. As members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, we believe that there is no conflict between being a Muslim and an American.

Our community has launched several campaigns, including, “Muslims for Loyalty,” “Muslims for Life” and “Muslims for Peace,” along with several interfaith dialogues all across the nation.

Through these campaigns we Ahmadi Muslims are educating both Muslims and non-Muslims about the true teachings of

Islam and the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be on him).

That Islam is a peaceful religion was demonstrated by the Prophet when he walked back to Mecca after years of exile and pardoned a whole city that had driven out Muslims from its every corner. Now Muslims need not wage war but should remain steadfast and peaceful.

**Ms. Rabia Salim**

*Reprinted from the Herald News  
published by the Chicago Sun Times*

# News, Views and Reviews

## Imran Khan, will he ever be an exemplary prime minister?

By Mike Ghouse

The fitna was started by Maulana Maududi; had it not been for him, Ziaul Haq and Bhutto, the Pakistanis would not have been belligerent towards fellow Pakistanis

Imran Khan was by far the least-worst candidate among the field of candidates for Pakistan. Indeed, he can be an exemplary candidate if he fixes some of the flaws of sectarianism blatantly expressed by him. Khan's statement that he has not asked the Ahmadiyya Muslims to vote for him is disturbing. Shouldn't the future head of Pakistan's government care about "all" Pakistanis? Does he not want to represent them?

The second statement was made in Urdu, reaffirming that the Ahmadiyya are not Muslims because they do not subscribe to the Khatimun Nabiyeen, the finality of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as the last prophet, as if he exclusively represents the Sunni Muslims and the hell with the others. Is this acceptable? As a leader of the nation he represents everyone, whether they believe in the Prophet (PBUH) or not. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) himself set the example of respecting Jews, Christians and others who did not believe in him, and not only that, he signed the treaty with them to co-exist and co-govern their own affairs per their own laws.

If Khan is like one of those other bad guys, that would be different; but he is a decent man and probably the only hope for Pakistan. He has earned that by being honest and a non-appeaser. Now worried about winning, he has started appeasing the mullahs, and speaking the language of the Jhangvi idiots who want to declare Pakistan as a Sunni nation; the next would be Ahle-sunnat, and then those among Ahle-Sunnat whose pants length is precise to the millimeter. There is no end to appeasing or calming down the fanatics, and they would extract a pound of flesh from him.

The question is why Khan should worry about the insignificant Ahmadiyya, Shia or Hindu minority. Is that the right thing to do? Did Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) not speak out for the oppressed? Here are some civil

examples, and I hope at least the Pakistani Americans would understand and support it.

1. Civil rights acts were passed to right the wrong done to the African Americans, a tiny minority. It was passed by the white majority; it was for the common good and justice, that all men are equal. Shouldn't Islamic Republic of Pakistan adopt this? Isn't that an Islamic value?

2. Lincoln's abolishment of slavery for Africans was passed by the white majority, indeed the only voters in senate then were white.

3. Barack Obama took the risk to stand up with the LGBT community where as everyone thought it was the death nail for him politically; even Muslims gave him over 80 percent of their vote, despite his support for the same sex marriage.

4. Humanity in general and Muslims in particular are guided to stand up for justice. Only the civility of majority can change things. Minorities do not have a voice in Pakistan and they live on with apprehensions. The Hindu parents worry when their daughter will be abducted and forced to convert or when the Ahmadiyya girl student will be kicked out of school or their graves are desecrated, Shias ordered out of the bus and shot point blank and Christians will be framed with blasphemy charges. Societies are judged by how they treat their minorities, women and children. Good Pakistanis are letting bad things happen in their names.

5. It is the Muslim thing to stand up against oppression.

6. 'Baad may karliengaye' (we will do it later), after election, is a lie. It will never happen. The foundation of Khan's campaign should have been based on integrity. As 96 percent of Pakistanis prefer freedom of faith as per the new Pew survey about Muslim attitudes towards the Sharia. Who is he representing then?

In all the cases above, there was an assumption that the majority does not favor it. Just like the statements from a few Pakistanis that Ahmadiyya should not call themselves Muslims. It is a Pakistani thing and not a Muslim thing.

Perhaps the issue started with the dictator brainwashing the vocal Pakistani public, because before that people minded their own business. The fitna was started by Maulana Maududi; had it not been for him, Ziaul Haq and Bhutto, the Pakistanis would not have been belligerent towards fellow Pakistanis.

Had that evil draconian anti-Islamic Hudood laws was not shoved on to Pakistanis, they would be standing up for the rights of all Pakistanis. Dictator's Hudood laws have become Allah's laws now, what an Irony. The germs have infected Bangladesh and Indonesia, and now affecting a few Indian Muslims as well.

Muslims around the world have little prejudice towards the Ahmadiyya. I meet large groups of Muslim scholars, imams and ministers from Muslim nations twice a year for coaching in pluralism. They do not have the bias that a few Pakistanis vocalise. I firmly believe if there is referendum, where individuals will not be identified, the Pakistani public will overwhelmingly want to get rid of the Hudood laws and the harassment of the Ahmadiyya Muslims.

A few, just a few will say why on earth is Khan supporting the Ahmadiyya? My answer is simple: it is not support for the Ahmadiyya, but rather an effort to preserve the character of Muslims and Islam, which is to stand up for Justice.

The issue is really not about Khatimun Nabiyeen, but do we as Muslims believe that Islam allows us to mistreat those who are not Sunnis? Khan should have said the Ahmadiyya (not Qadianis, which is like the N word to them) are Pakistanis, and they have every right to vote, instead of reiterating that they are not Muslims, and that as a possible head of the government I represent them and to represent them, I would ask for their vote.

Democracy is not an easy system, it asks a lot from everyone. It is testing one's ability to hear different opinions without feeling hatred for the others. Most Muslims have democracy in their hearts and souls; many more are yet to get it. Thank God, I was a minority in India, and a minority in the US. The majoritarian arrogance is not by the majority, but by a few among them, who assume a blanket authorisation by the silence of the real majority. It is time for the majority to speak up and get Imran Khan to represent every Pakistani without discrimination. If not he is just another politician claiming to follow the Prophet (PBUH), but he is not.

Mike Ghouse is a speaker, thinker and a writer on pluralism, politics, peace, Islam, Israel, India, interfaith, and cohesion at work place. He is committed to building a Cohesive America and offers pluralistic solutions on issues of the day at [www.TheGhousediciary.com](http://www.TheGhousediciary.com)



# News, Views and Reviews

*But do you hear them?*

## Muslims do condemn violence

By Qasim Rashid

It took 9,000 officers, five days, and roughly \$1 billion in lost revenue for Boston, but suspect one is dead and suspect two is in custody. So let me start with the standard roll call: As an American Muslim, I condemn all violence in the name of religion. Terrorism has no religion and Islam is no exception. If the Tsarnaev brothers are guilty of the Boston bombings, then I hope they are brought to justice.

Is that condemnation clear enough? Because I'm pretty sure a whole lot of people instead read blah blah blah blah.

Here's the deal. It is a shame that we had to employ 9,000 officers, put our lives on hold for five days, and sacrifice \$1 billion in Boston revenue to catch these culprits. It is a shame that Muslim women were assaulted in retaliation, and that's even before we knew who the suspects were. And it is a shame I received threats of anti-Muslim violence and that even my non-Muslim but non-white friends called me, fearing for their safety.



*True justice and fairness requires that rather than judging Islam in a prejudiced manner or by making false assumptions based on hearsay, a person should study the religion and try to develop an understanding of its teachings before criticising it and its Founder. An informed decision about any issue can only be made once a person has studied its teachings in depth and strived to learn the truth. The truth or reality of any faith can only be learned from those who are practising or striving to follow its true and authentic teachings. Today, it is the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, which claims to follow the original and true teachings of Islam and is spreading it. - Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul-Masih V<sup>ba</sup>, Worldwide Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.*

# News, Views and Reviews

And now the public lynching and double standards against Islam begin. Mental illness was the culprit during Newtown, Conn., Oak Creek, Wis., and Aurora, Colo. More than 70 percent of America's 64 previous mass shooters were white American men. But not one pundit, nor any politician, nor any Muslim has ever asked why White Americans or Christian Americans are not aggressively condemning these acts of terror. After all, why ask such a ludicrous question? Anyone with a functioning cerebrum could comprehend that these terrorists represent only themselves.

But why do our brains shut down when the slightest indication exists that the culprit might maybe possibly be Muslim? No sooner did the Boston tragedy occur -- and even before the slightest indication emerged regarding who perpetrated the attack -- but I received dozens of emails and messages asking why "moderate Muslims" aren't condemning the attack?

This was my initial reaction to such demands for condemnation.

Muslims condemned 9/11, we condemned 7/7, we condemned the Fort Hood tragedy, we condemned the underwear bomber, we condemned the Times Square bomber, and now yet again we find ourselves condemning the Boston Bombers on the mere suspicion that they were "motivated by Islam."

And this is why I am unsure if people hear Muslims when Muslims declare -- in response to every violent act or attempt at violence -- that Islam condemns all forms of religious violence and terrorism. Because even after condemning the Boston bombers, I receive messages that the condemnation wasn't "loud enough" or "clear enough" or passionate enough." "In other words, all they heard from me was blah blah blah blah blah.

And the fact is Muslims have gone far beyond mere condemnation but taken action. The Muslims for Life campaign has raised over 25,000 blood donations in the past two years to honor 9/11 victims. The #MyJihad campaign serves to demonstrate Jihad's true meaning. The Muslims for Peace campaign champions true, peaceful Islam. I could go on but hopefully you get the picture.

America is not under threat from radical Islam, but it is under threat from radical ignorance. This ignorance is a far more powerful and far more destructive force than any act of terror. I speak having experienced the horrific after effects of such ignorance.

Some 40 years ago, Pakistan decided to succumb to such ignorance and direct its wrath against my peaceful and pluralistic Muslim sect -- the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. What began as passive discrimination advanced to laws banning our freedom

of expression and worship, to now open violence against all religious and belief minorities in Pakistan -- Ahmadi Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Shiite Muslims, Baha'is, and atheists. Pakistan went from a relatively peaceful nation entirely alien to terrorist attacks, to one that suffers through 3,000 civilian deaths from terrorists annually and now devoid of religious freedom.

If Americans have any hope of winning the "war on terror," it won't come from demonizing American Muslims, or Islam in general. It will come from education through interfaith dialogues, joining together in service of humanity, and recognizing that we are all equal human beings in search of similar goals of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It will come from all Americans rejecting ignorance and uniting even stronger against extremism that tries to divide us.

The path of radical ignorance is a one way street; if we go down this path, don't expect to come back so easily. As I said, I've tried reasoning with extremists in Pakistan to give up discrimination and favor tolerance.

But all they seem to hear is blah blah blah blah blah.◆

Follow Qasim Rashid on Twitter: [www.twitter.com/MuslimIQ](http://www.twitter.com/MuslimIQ)



**Abu Musa Ash'ari relates that he called on the Holy Prophet with two of his cousins and one of them said to him: Messenger of Allah, appoint us to some office out of that which Allah has committed to you. The other also said something to the same effect. The Holy Prophet said: I do not appoint anyone to public office who asks for it or desires it.**

**(Bukhari and Muslim)**



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“It is essential that those who are able to afford to travel should attend the Jalsa which is in so many ways a source of blessings. They should not mind minor losses in the way. God gives ample rewards to sincere believers at every step and no hardship or trouble goes to waste (it is definitely rewarded by God). I should like to make it clear that this Jalsa must not be taken like other gatherings. This is a special event that has been based on the succor of God.” (Ishtihar, 7 December 1891)





# The Age of Misinformation

**W**e are  
living in  
the age  
of the

internet, an unprecedented creation of human beings in which the whole world is a player. We have Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn and various other social media which are being used by over a billion people around the globe. Information gets transmitted throughout the world instantaneously, but so does misinformation.

Information pasted, typed and uploaded by over a billion people 24-7 on the internet is used through Google search and various other engines. What are the qualifications of these writers and what is their character like? We don't even know whether they are righteous or evil. What are their agendas and intentions in disseminating particular messages and information? We may not even know their real names and locations but every day we quote and rely on the information because 'we saw it on the internet'.

Some time ago, there was a story about a woman who sued McDonald's because she claimed their coffee was too hot. The internet had a blast with that story and so did the late night comedians. Everyone was discussing the story. TV comedy show Seinfeld even based a whole episode on it.

I did my own survey on this story among my friends to see how accurate their information was about this well publicized, extensively talked about story.

I asked them how old was the lady who sued McDonald's. Was she driving at the time she spilled coffee on herself? How seriously was she burnt, 1<sup>st</sup> degree, 2<sup>nd</sup> degree or 3<sup>rd</sup> degree? What was the settlement amount in this case? Don't need the exact amount, a million, less than a million or more than a million?

You would expect that in a well talked about story, my friends would know this basic information. I was appalled at the answers I got, mostly inaccurate. What about the stories of importance about security and of national importance? How are we supposed to make sure that we are getting accurate information? That scared me.

My attention was drawn to a verse in the Holy Qur'an in which it provides us guidance about spreading news.

"When there comes to them a matter of security or of fear they publish it widely. Whereas if they were to refer it to the Prophet and to those in authority among them, those of them whose business it is to investigate would ascertain the truth of that matter. Was it not for the Grace of God upon you, and His Mercy, you would certainly have gone astray, except a few" (4:84).

This commandment is given to us about spreading gossip and untrustworthy news. More importantly, it is referring to matters concerning national importance of security and matters that may spread fear and anxiety among the public. God has told us that it is not for everyone to investigate but it is vested in people in authority. Any matter of importance should be referred to them so after investigation, they can publicize it to the citizens. Irresponsible or false news are covered by this verse also; even if it is a harmless story of a woman and hot coffee. At the least it would save us from wasting so much of our time on unverified and unsubstantiated facts.

By now, some of you probably have already Googled in trying to find out the answers to the questions in my informal survey. However, I will still go ahead and give you the answers.

The lady was in her 70's and her grandson was driving her around. He decided to stop at McDonald's and asked her if she wanted something. She asked for a cup of coffee so he brought her one while she was in the car in the parking lot. While they were parked,

she proceeded to add sugar and cream. While she was opening the lid, the coffee spilled in her lap and she got burnt; not 1<sup>st</sup>, not 2<sup>nd</sup> but 3<sup>rd</sup> degree burns and was in severe pain. Her grandson took her straight to the hospital from where she was sent to the burn center.

All she wanted from McDonald's was the medical costs but they refused. She could not afford to pay the amount. I am sure they did not want to set a precedent. There could be a whole lot of people lined up to sue them.

It was discovered by the attorneys that most restaurants serve coffee between 160°F and 170°F. McDonald's was serving coffee between 180°F and 190°F so it would stay fresh longer, a corporate policy to increase profits. Just FYI, the boiling point of water is 212°F. They lost the case and appealed. Eventually the case was settled.

How much did she receive? If you guessed at any amount, it is just a guess because the amount of settlement was secret under the court order. Professionals in this field estimated based on their experience in such cases that it would have been between 400 to 600 thousand dollars, most of it for punitive damages.

Just compare the real facts to the general public's impression of a woman trying to get rich by suing McDonald's.

The internet is a great creation of human minds. It can be and is a wonderful tool in communications and transfer of knowledge across the globe. Let us use it responsibly to get the best of it. Let us not waste this remarkable medium for irresponsible gossip and idle talk.

God also says in the Holy Qur'an that there will be no idle talk in Heaven (88:12).

It is up to us to make our world a Heaven by following the commandments and guidance of God given to us through His Mercy.

Spreading this message would be beneficial to everyone on the globe, through the internet, of course. ♦

*Falahud Din Shams*





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The Muslim Sunrise is published by the  
Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA 15000  
Good Hope Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905.

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